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Stories of Resilience

Exploring resilience amongst part-time trainee teachers in the Netherlands

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Exploring resilience amongst part-time trainee teachers in the Netherlands

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“To teach to one’s best over time requires everyday resilience.” (Day and Gu, 2014: 20)

Abstract

This research investigates what teaching experiences, strategies and factors impact on early career teachers' (ECTs') resilience in secondary colleges in the south of the Netherlands. The ECTs are undergraduate trainee teachers who are enrolled as part-time English as a Foreign language students. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve individual ECTs from three different cohorts, twice in the timespan of two years, in order to get access to the reality of everyday school life viewed through the ECTs' lens. The three different cohorts consisted of four beginning ECTs, four regular ECTs and four long-term ECTs.

Data was collected over a two-year period and included recorded interviews with ECTs, line drawings, relational maps, ECTs' portfolios and the researcher's memos. The participants recalled their teaching experiences by means of analysing critical incidents that occurred in their classrooms. The data collection, analysis and discussion were organised into twelve cases. A thematic data analysis was used (Guest et al., 2012; Braun & Clarke, 2013), with the help of ATLAS.ti 7 software.

The findings show that the ECTs were often expected to take on the full range of teaching tasks in isolation, with little support to cope with all the demands of their new role. The ECTs found that personal factors, such as self-efficacy and a sense of agency, helped develop their resilience, as well as contextual resources provided in schools and by employing bodies. Although the development of resilience was different for every ECT, participants also shared common strategies that contributed to development of resilience, such as emotional regulation, seeking renewal, goal setting and help seeking, when overcoming the setbacks they experienced. By identifying strategies that impact on resilience, this research has strengthened the guidelines on which induction programmes at Teacher Education Colleges can be made. It is suggested that ECTs are mentored around developing resilience strategies, in order to increase their confidence to work and teach in a new school environment. It is argued that the critical incidents approach, designed to support ECTs in building stories about their teaching experiences, could be used as a teaching methodology for trainee teachers at Teaching Education Colleges.

In loving memory of my parents
Annie Mastenbroek and Leo Roosken

Contents

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Chapter One

1. General Introduction

1.1 Context and Scope of Research

Considerable research has been carried out on the difficulties facing early career teachers (ECTs) and metaphors alluding to warfare have been used to explain the problems ECTs face when trying to survive "in the trenches" (Bezzina, 2006). Often these problems lead to high levels of early career attrition, with teachers leaving the teaching profession (Ingersoll, 2001, 2003; Ingersoll & Perda, 2012; Schelvis et al., 2014; Maulana et al., 2015). The first five years of teaching seem to be a critical period in teachers' decision to stay in or leave the profession (Lindqvist et al., 2014). Retaining teachers in the early stages is therefore a major concern. The large drop-out rate of Dutch ECTs has an impact on the number of qualified teachers in secondary schools. According to the 2012 PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) results, students in Europe are being taught in schools where teaching is hindered by a lack of qualified teachers in the core subjects (Language of instruction, Mathematics and Science). "In Germany, the Netherlands and Turkey, the percentages are high not only for the core subjects but also for other school subjects" (European Commission, 2012: 14).

In addressing the high rates of attrition in the teaching workforce, researchers have increasingly looked to the role played by the organisational context in ECTs' retention decisions (Kardos, et al., 2001; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Johnson and Birkeland, for example, interviewed first and second year teachers across 3 years of teaching, finding that schools that promoted frequent interactions between colleagues were more successful at retaining teachers. Recent American research (Santoro, 2011) points to an increasing frequency in the percentage of teachers who leave because of poor working conditions, a lack of autonomy and respect for the profession, and increasing amounts of bureaucracy and high-stakes testing that take away valuable time from the curriculum.

There appears to be limited research on the classroom experiences of ECTs in their first year(s) in the Netherlands (Konermann, 2012; Helms-Lorenz et al., 2013). Given the current economic and political context that surrounds the teaching profession in the Netherlands, research on ECTs' experiences is particularly significant. Recent data shows that nearly twenty per cent of Dutch secondary teachers would like to leave the profession in the first five years (Statistieken Arbeidsmarkt Onderwijssectoren, STAMOS, Statistical Institute devoted to the educational sector, 2016), and the exodus is even greater in the four major cities Amsterdam, Utrecht, The Hague and Rotterdam (Ministerie van OCW, Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2012). There is it would seem a need to explore the experiences of ECTs in order to investigate how the problem of teacher attrition can be addressed. Hoffius (2010) found that two thirds of the teachers younger than 35 indicated that they would like to leave the profession. When asked to explain why they wanted to leave, their first concern was work stress, followed closely by salary prospects and then came career possibilities. Of the teachers over 35, forty six per cent wanted to leave their job. On top of their list was also work stress, followed by poor management and then came salary prospects.

In the Netherlands part-time trainee teachers are encouraged to take up temporary jobs as supply teachers even before completing their courses at teacher education colleges (TECs). Within the Dutch context part-time trainee teachers are mature-aged and for their training need to attend a teacher education department for a minimum of four years. Their courses at the TEC are scheduled for two evenings and one afternoon every week, further explained in section 1.5. School mentors and secondary school principals employ trainees as soon as possible, so that they gain confidence and consolidate their skills but also to take up hard-to-fill vacancies (Helms-Lorenz et al., 2013). Some of these trainees feel confident about joining the workforce before their courses have finished, whereas others are scared of being thrown in at the deep end. They all face the challenge of finding and negotiating a place of their own in the school's organisation. Not surprisingly, a considerable number of these ECTs start teaching with insufficient subject knowledge and poor teaching skills. When describing how they felt when they first started teaching trainees talked about "bluffing or blundering on" (Senior, 2006: 51) and "sinking or swimming" (Snoek, 2014: 6), implying that they were struggling with their levels of knowledge and expertise.

The transition that the trainee teacher must make when moving from the TEC to the school classroom to teach for the first time has been described as a type of “practice shock” (McCormack et al., 2006: 103). This is because the ideals that the ECTs formed during their teacher education programme are very different from the reality in the classroom (Britzman, 2003; McCann & Johannessen, 2004). Despite having had extended periods of traineeships, ECTs feel unprepared when they transition from the TEC to the classroom (Friedman, 2004). This seems to have implications for the TEC programmes that need to focus more on didactical competence, problems with authority and effective classroom management (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002).

Teaching is considered one of the most stressful occupations (Johnson et al., 2005; Day & Gu, 2014) due to a high workload, inadequate salary, large class sizes, emotional demands, student misbehaviour, and the perceived low status of the profession (Hakanen et al., 2006). Furthermore, Dutch research (The Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research, TNO, 2010) shows that teachers in secondary education identify a heavy workload and work pressure, because of high peak moments during the school year, the number of new tasks they have to perform, the relatively low level of autonomy in their work, and the little support they receive from their school organization. In the same report 81% of secondary school teachers indicated that they would prefer a lower workload compared with 43% of the total workforce in the Netherlands.

As far back as 1966, Lortie refers to the phenomenon of the beginning teacher thrown into the deep end “to sink or swim” as the Robinson Crusoe approach. The image of the lonely Robinson Crusoe, stranded on a desert island during his early years even without his loyal servant Friday is a very strong metaphor for the experience of first year teachers. Lortie talks about the destructive professional loneliness of the novice teacher. More than 30 years later Halford (1998) says that teaching is “the profession that eats its young” (p. 33). She discusses how schools can support novice educators so that they not only survive but also thrive. About 30 per cent of teachers leave in the first five years in the United States and therefore her focus is on teacher attrition. The first year is often considered to be the most difficult in a teacher's career and when novices have survived their first months they can focus on equally responsible tasks such as individual students' needs and long-term planning (Anhorn, 2008).

Darling-Hammond (2003) also identifies that salaries, working conditions, teacher preparation and mentoring support in the early years are the four major factors that influence whether and when teachers leave specific schools or the education profession entirely. The California data indicated that large class sizes, poor facilities to multitask, year-round schedules and low administrative support all contribute to the teacher's sense of poor working conditions.

The focus of this qualitative research is to investigate the resilience building process in twelve ECTs belonging to three different cohorts. The transition process of the ECTs who all teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) stands central as they move from the teacher education course to the classroom experience.

As shown in *Figure 1*:

Cohort 1 will include four long-term undergraduates who are quite experienced teachers as they have taught for longer periods during the past six to ten years and all of them have had paid jobs often at different schools. Even though these undergraduates are no longer in their early days of teaching, they still have not graduated and therefore are unqualified teachers. Their years of enrolment will be 2006 – 2008.

Cohort 2 will include four part-time ECTs who have had at least three traineeships, this means in total about 100 hours of teaching. Their years of enrolment will be 2010-2011.

Cohort 3 will be four students, newly enrolled in the TEC and new to EFL teaching. Their years of enrolment will be 2012-2014.

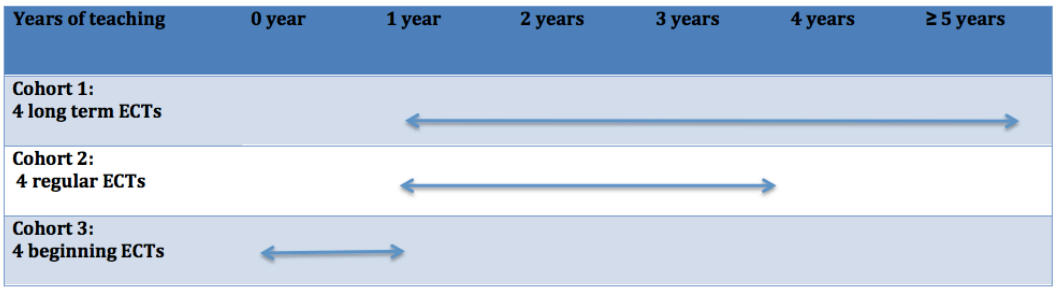


Figure 1: participants and their years of teaching

The study of secondary EFL teacher resilience is important, as resilience is associated with teacher retention and effectiveness (Day et al., 2007). Resilience can enhance career satisfaction and better prepare teachers to adjust to the changing conditions of education as they rely on their personal and professional identities in their teacher role performances (Howard & Johnson, 2004; Gu & Day, 2007). The focus of resilience research has moved from identifying personal traits and protective factors to investigating how these traits and factors may contribute to positive outcomes. “Positive emotions such as joy, interest, contentment and love, promote resilience” (Gu & Day, 2007: 1304). Developing and sustaining resilience is essential for beginning teachers in order to improve their skills and competences. Understanding what enables ECTs to grow and sustain their resilience can improve the support of beginning professionals.

The research data will be collected over a two-year period and will include recorded interviews with twelve ECTs, line drawings, relational maps, ECTs’ portfolios and the researcher’s memos. Inspired by Yin (2014) this research will employ cases to organise the data in order to make it manageable for the analysis process. Short vignettes will be presented that provide biographical details and will show the range of experience amongst the twelve ECTs.

1.2 Significance of the Research

The research will contribute to knowledge in five main areas. First, many studies on resilience “have focused on the dysfunctional strategies of individual teachers”, in other words they investigate what is going wrong (Howard & Johnson, 2004: 399). This research will adopt a different approach to the question of ECTs’ resilience, as the focus will be on why some ECTs are able to cope successfully with the first years of teaching whereas others appear to lose confidence. Second, this research will add to the significant body of literature on teacher resilience by addressing major gaps in the current knowledge on ECTs' resilience in a Dutch context. Third, it will inform the design of more effective teacher education programmes and mentoring programmes. It is hoped that the examination of ECTs’ resilience will help teacher education colleges to develop programmes that foster resilience and thus possibly contribute towards retaining a highly trained teaching force. Fourth, it will provide greater clarity of

selection criteria when choosing who enters the profession by discussing the present Dutch practice of *one size fits all*. As there is no clearly defined intake procedure prospective students are offered the same trajectory when they enrol. Finally, by focusing on twelve cases the researcher will investigate how the cases may be attractive teaching vehicles within a teacher development trajectory. The researcher intends to elicit stories about the ECTs' first years of teaching, which may inspire other trainee teachers.

1.3 Aims and Objectives of Research

The research aims to

1. Investigate development of resilience affecting ECTs' progress from the TEC to the classroom;
2. Explore the factors that impact on teacher resilience within a group of ECTs, who teach English as a Foreign Language, based in urban schools in the south of the Netherlands.

The objectives therefore are:

- To understand what knowledge can support ECTs' professional learning most effectively;
- To explore the interplay between personal and contextual factors;
- To understand the effective aspects of their teacher education programme;
- To understand the effective aspects of their teacher induction programme.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions are constructed to be able to analyse the ECTs' stories, how they cope with classroom situations and how they remain resilient. This research will seek to uncover experiences, strategies and personal and contextual factors that have helped twelve ECTs succeed and thrive in responding to challenging behaviour in a Dutch context.

Based on the research aims, the following research questions guided this research:

1. What kinds of experiences contribute to changes in ECTs' resilience?
2. What kinds of strategies contribute to changes in ECTs' resilience?
3. What personal and contextual factors contribute to changes in ECTs' resilience?

1.5 Definition of Salient Terms

As the researcher is a Dutch teacher educator conducting research at a TEC, a few definitions of terms used throughout this dissertation will be discussed. In the Netherlands, teacher education or pre-service education for secondary school teachers takes place at a University of Applied Sciences. The B.Ed. graduates may teach at the three lower forms of HAVO (senior general secondary education) and VWO (pre-university education), all four forms of VMBO (pre-vocational secondary education) and all three forms of MBO (secondary vocational education). M.Ed. graduates may teach at upper secondary school (See *Appendix 9*).

In this research, the term ECTs always refers to student teachers, also called newly trained teachers, novice teachers and candidate teachers in the literature (Senior, 2006; Beltman et al., 2011; Mansfield et al., 2012). The ECTs are trainees who are part-time undergraduates and mature-aged (age range of 25 to 62 years old) as opposed to the full-time undergraduates (age range of 18 to 25 years old). For purpose of clarity those taught by ECTs are referred to as school pupils.

As Dutch teacher education departments cannot be selective, they frequently admit students who will take longer than the minimum of four years to become fully qualified teachers. These students, often part-time students, sometimes teach more than 20 hours a week next to trying to complete their B.Ed. course work. The role and position of these trainee teachers is fundamentally different from that of newly qualified teachers, who are formally staff members.

Dutch part-time students do not receive grants from the government. They need to combine their study with an almost full-time job and often a family to provide for. As there is an EFL teacher shortage in the Netherlands, schools employ unqualified

teachers (Kan, 2014). This context applies to about 53 long-term B.Ed. students of EFL registered at the TEC (statistics of the department of English, internal TEC document, 2016).

Within the Dutch context, part-time trainee teachers of EFL study at a teacher education department for four years, they take ten hours of classes scheduled for one evening and one afternoon plus evening every week. Half of the TEC undergraduate curriculum for EFL teachers consists of courses on content knowledge, in this case EFL, and the other half consists of courses on general pedagogical skills, pedagogical content knowledge and traineeships. During the four years, they undertake four teaching practice placements consisting of 10 hours, 40 hours, 60 hours and 80 hours of teaching, respectively. They write portfolios for all four traineeships and have coaching sessions with a school based mentor and a TEC based mentor on a regular basis. School based mentors are secondary school teachers who teach a particular subject and not necessarily the same subject as the ECTs teach. They coach trainee teachers on the particular weekday the trainees are present at the secondary school. TEC based mentors are teacher educators who usually only observe trainee teachers teach twice over a period of eight to ten weeks.

The school might offer an induction period to the newcomers. The induction period is a structured phase of support given to newly qualified, but also unqualified teachers when they begin their first teaching posts. During the induction period, these teachers carry out all or many of the tasks allocated to experienced teachers, and they are frequently remunerated for their work. The induction phase is different from a purely administrative probationary period. It normally lasts at least several months (European Commission, 2012).

1.6 The Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organised into seven chapters. Chapter One is the introduction and provides the context and scope, the aims and objectives, the research questions and a definition of salient terms. Chapter Two presents an overview of the relevant literature in order to develop an understanding of resilience. Personal and contextual factors are

explored to examine their significance in developing resilience. This is followed by a discussion of the concept of resilience, next teacher effectiveness, and lastly the developmental stages of a teacher. Finally, the role of reflection in professional learning is presented. Chapter Three discusses the methodology and design, the case study approach, the data collection, details of data analysis and ethical considerations. Chapter Four presents a critical reflection on the data collection and the data analysis process. Chapter Five presents and discusses the data following the three research questions. Chapter Six discusses the results of a cross-case analysis linking research questions and theoretical framework to conclusions. Chapter Seven concludes with contributions to educational practice, limitations of the research along with suggestions for practice and for future research.

Chapter Two

2. Review of the Relevant Literature

This chapter presents a critical discussion of the relevant literature for this research, divided into four main sections. It aims to present conceptualisations of terms and explain why these concepts are relevant to the three research questions. The first section explores understandings of resilience and the conceptual *Framework of Conditions Supporting ECTs' Resilience*, recently reported by Johnson and colleagues (2014). The second section examines teacher effectiveness and its association with resilience. The third section focuses on the developmental model presented in the Variations in Teachers' Lives, Work and Effectiveness (VITAE) research by Day et al. (2006). The final sections focus on ECTs' professional learning and the significance of the core reflection model of Korthagen (2004). The literature reviewed has informed the thinking behind this research and the research design. It may also assist the identification of those areas that require further investigation.

In recent years, researchers and practitioners in many countries have addressed problems in relation to beginning teachers leaving the profession after a short period (The Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research, TNO, 2010; European Commission, 2012; Schleicher, 2012). Retention policies have mainly focused around ECTs, as this is where most teacher attrition seems to occur. The effect of high teacher turnover and dropout rates on the achievement of pupils should be of great concern to policy makers and teachers' associations. In an era of recurring teacher shortages, countries struggle to retain their teachers in the early stages (Beltman et al., 2011; Kan, 2014). The problem of new teachers' attrition should therefore be high on the agenda of teacher educators and policy makers. In their extensive analysis of the international research on teacher resilience Day and Gu (2014) postulate that:

> "Themes of 'teacher attrition' and 'stress' continue to dominate the educational research literature and remain a regular feature of surveys on teacher morale and well-being nationally and internationally." (p. xvi)

Rather than looking from the perspective of what goes wrong for the ECTs and what is causing the high attrition rates, this research focuses on what goes right and what makes ECTs resilient. Teachers who are resilient may find it easier to adapt to change and therefore may be able to survive and thrive during their first years of teaching. A better understanding of resilience and how it may be fostered offers the potential for more effective interventions to occur in both the TEC and the teaching profession (Sumsion, 2003; Doney, 2013). Significantly, ECTs' stories about their field experiences can have a positive effect in terms of better understanding the teaching profession and reduce their anxiety about teaching (Rice, 2003). According to Rice, the quality of teacher preparation and the quantity of training opportunities are a major issue of concern. Examining factors that sustain ECTs and what factors affect the level of resilience as they move from pre-service to the early career stage may help to address the problem of high attrition rates. There has been increasing concern about retaining teachers but also retaining "teachers of commitment and quality" (Day & Gu, 2014: xvi), which will be further critically discussed when addressing teacher effectiveness.

2.1 Understandings of Resilience

Research suggests that resilience is an unstable construct (Rutter, 1990; Masten et al., 1999, 2012). It involves psychological, behavioural and cognitive functioning within various settings, personal, relational and organisational (Day & Gu, 2014). Resilience amongst young children and adults has been well studied but there remains relatively limited research on beginning teachers' resilience. Beltman et al.'s (2011) critique of research on teacher resilience, together with evidence from research on associations between teachers' commitment, resilience and effectiveness (Day & Gu, 2014), provide the basis for a conceptualisation of the dynamic nature of teacher resilience employed in this research.

2.1.1 Adults and Resilience

Rutter (1990) called resilience the "ubiquitous phenomenon of individual difference in people's responses to stress and adversity" (p. 181). Wolin and Wolin (1993) defined resilience as "the capacity to bounce back, to withstand hardship, and to repair yourself" (p. 5). Luthar and Brown (2007) suggest that it is inaccurate to imply that resilience in

adults is associated with personal attributes only. It is more a social construction influenced by multidimensional factors that are unique to each context (Ungar, 2008). It is also influenced by adults' "biographies and the conditions of their work and lives" (Day & Gu, 2013: 39). Over the course of an adult's professional life, resilience is not a static or innate state but is influenced individually by his or her strength as a professional. Indeed, Luthar et al. (2000) assert that resilience should always be used when referring to a "dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (p. 554).

Despite great diversity in approaches to researching resilience, there are shared core considerations in the way resilience is conceptualised. First, previous research on resilience presupposes a positive response to conditions of significant adversity (Masten et al., 1999, 2012; Luthar et al., 2000). Secondly, it suggests that resilience can be learned and acquired and that it is not innate or fixed (Higgins, 1994). Luthar et al. (2000) also contend that it is not a static state because "there is no question that all individuals – resilient or otherwise – show fluctuations over time within particular adjustment domains" (p. 551). Third, personal characteristics, competences and positive influences of the social environment in which the adult works and lives, contribute to the process of resilience building (Gordon et al., 2000). Central in this third consideration is that personal resources and contextual factors may impact resilience positively.

2.1.2 Teachers and Resilience

Current researchers of teacher resilience (Beltman et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2012; Le Cornu, 2013: Day & Gu, 2014; Mansfield et al., 2014, 2016) often present a list of characteristics of resilient teachers. When comparing and investigating these lists it seems almost impossible to identify resilience by referring to one single aspect. According to Howard and Johnson (2004) teachers displaying resilience often

1. demonstrate effective strategies for working with difficult students;
2. respond appropriately to violent behaviour;
3. respond to critical incidents and students' personal problems and needs in genuine but emotionally self-protective ways;

4. manage relations with colleagues effectively;
5. manage time and workload successfully;
6. handle change flexibly and creatively (p. 406).

These characteristics seem to be related to teacher competences (Bieri & Schuler, 2011; internal document TEC, 2016). Resilience in teachers is not only the ability to bounce back in extremely difficult circumstances but also a capacity to respond positively to the unavoidable uncertainties inherent in their professional lives (Day & Gu, 2014). The six characteristics are neatly conceptualised in the following definitions of resilience. Oswald et al. (2003) claim that it is a “capacity to overcome personal vulnerabilities and environmental stressors, to be able to 'bounce back' in the face of potential risks, and to maintain well-being” (p. 50). Patterson et al. (2004) state that resilient teachers use “energy productively to achieve school goals in the face of adverse conditions” (p. 3). Brunetti (2006) says that resilience is “a quality that enables teachers to maintain their commitment to teaching and their teaching practices despite challenging conditions and recurring setbacks” (p. 813). Sammons et al. (2007) view resilience as a “capacity to continue to 'bounce back', to recover strength or spirit quickly and efficiently in the face of adversity” (p. 694), and see it as “a dynamic construct subject to influence by environmental, work-specific and personal contexts” (ibid.). Finally, Tait (2008) describes it as “a mode of interacting with events in the environment that is activated and nurtured in times of stress” (p. 58).

More recently, Day and Gu (2013) contend that resilience "was neither innate nor stable and was much more than a capacity to survive and thrive in extremely adverse circumstances" (p. 22). In their research with ECTs the capacity to be resilient changed as a result of the influences of the personal, relational and organizational setting in which they worked. For many of the participants, their sense of resilience was perceived to be a necessity for sustaining their capacity to teach to their best ability. The ECTs’ capacities to be resilient were influenced not only by personal factors, such as their biographies and the strength of their educational values, but also by contextual factors, such as the socio-cultural and political contexts of teaching.

Mansfield et al. (2014) suggest a further fine-tuning of the contextual and personal challenges and resources in a model of ECT resilience (as shown in *Figure 1*).

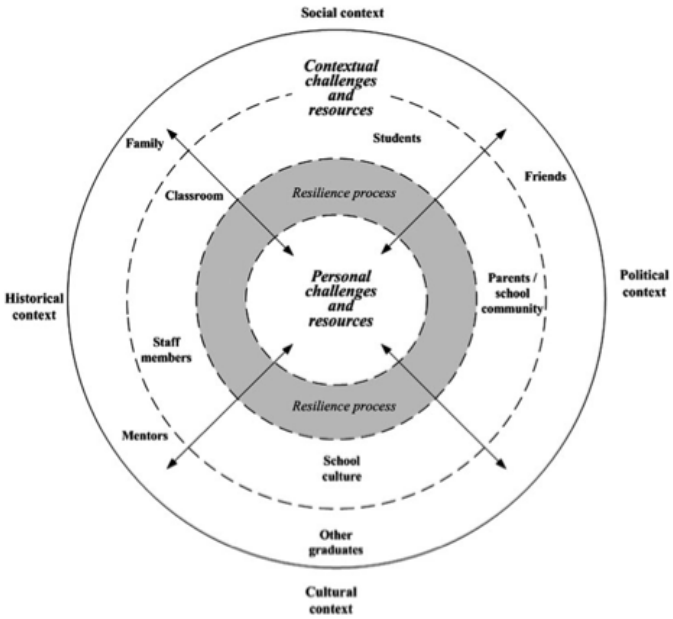


Figure 1: a model of early career teacher resilience, Mansfield et al. (2014: 550)

The inner circle points to personal factors, which may be perceived as challenging factors or protective resources. The outer circles indicate the various contextual factors such as family and friends, peers, staff members, parents and students, in this research referred to as pupils. At the interface of the personal and contextual factors, indicated by the grey circle, Mansfield et al. locate the resilience process. In the next section both the personal and the contextual factors will be further elaborated upon. Importantly, in this model resilience is regarded as a process so therefore there are double arrows. Mansfield et al.'s (ibid.) findings show that the school-level challenges were most prominent amongst ECTs. Their findings indicate a dynamic interplay that takes place between personal and contextual challenges and resources, which highlights the potentially infinite variations in the way the resilience process occurs for ECTs. They conclude resilience is a "somewhat idiosyncratic phenomenon as each person brings his or her own experiences and characteristics to multiple, changing contexts" (ibid.: 562).

In Day and Gu's (2013) research ECTs' resilience is not primarily associated with the capacity to "bounce back" in adverse circumstances or recover from a traumatic teaching event but it is more the capacity to maintain "equilibrium and a sense of commitment and agency in the everyday worlds in which teachers teach" (p. 26). Rather than seeing resilience as an innate trait of the individual, a capacity you may or may not have they

consider resilience as a "multidimensional, socially constructed concept" (Day & Gu, 2014: 6). Patterson et al. (2004) focus on strategies used by urban teachers to build their personal resilience. Their research seems to be important as all twelve ECTs are based at an urban school setting as opposed to rural or suburban schools. The nine strategies include acting from a set of values in decision making, seeking professional learning, mentoring other teachers and focusing on students and their learning. They define resilience as "using energy productively to achieve school goals in the face of adverse conditions" (p. 5).

Howard and Johnson's (2004) list seems to suggest that resilience may at most be inferred from certain behaviour a teacher displays. This list of teacher behaviour seems too closely related to teacher competences and it does not seem to account for all the aspects this research seeks to investigate. The Mansfield et al. (2014) model, however, seems to be closer to the conceptualisation of resilience as a complex and multidimensional process. It highlights the role of personal and contextual factors and the interplay between them. At the interface of person and context this research will seek to enable the ECTs' stories of resilience to be told.

For the purpose of this research, resilience is taken to mean "the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (Masten et al., 1990: 425). This definition has been chosen because it highlights the complex interplay between the individual and the environment. Furthermore, this definition provides a road map for this research. The first research question addresses the ECTs' experiences referring to the "outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging circumstances" (ibid.). The second research question addresses the ECTs' strategies, referring to "the process of … successful adaptation" (ibid.) and the third research question refers to the ECTs' personal and contextual factors referring to the "capacity for successful adaptation" (ibid.). The three research questions alter the order of the three elements in Masten et al.'s definition. By first discussing the outcome of, the process of and next the capacity for successful adaptation the researcher is able to build the ECTs' stories of resilience. Conceptualising resilience as an outcome, a process and capacity allows for a positive view of the concept. Focusing on Masten et al.'s (1990) definition should enable the researcher to investigate some critical incidents in ECTs' lives and critically examine how their resilience was affected.

2.1.3 Personal and Contextual Factors

Much research on ECTs' resilience was conducted in Australia, Canada, the USA, the UK and Ireland (Le Cornu, 2009; Beltman et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2012; Mansfield et al., 2012 and 2014). Beltman et al. (2011) reviewed fifty recent empirical studies on the resilience of ECTs. Their research sheds light on personal and contextual factors and labels each of them as either protective or threatening. As the focus of this research is on factors that sustain ECTs, it is suggested to investigate the relationship between perceived threatening and protective factors, as they may vary greatly in different settings and for different individuals. What may be a resource for one ECT can be a challenge for another.

Starting with the personal factors, a major study on teachers' resilience by Day (2008) found that resilient teachers possess a sense of self-efficacy and a sense of agency, which are seen to be fundamental to a teacher's motivation and commitment. Sustaining and enhancing teachers' commitment and resilience was found to be both a key quality of a teacher, and at the same time a reason for the ECTs to stay in teaching. According to Day, successful teachers must be passionately motivated and committed, so that their resilience will be enhanced. Furthermore, self-efficacy appears to be most easily impacted in the early years of teaching experience, and somewhat resistant to change once a teacher is established (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007).

The contextual factors that enable both pupils and teachers to learn are "structure, consistency, support and the freedom to take risks" according to Sargent (2003: 45). ECTs want to work in a learning community in which they feel they belong, where they may find support from school, mentors, colleagues and students. To establish a supportive environment for ECTs, schools must offer teachers professional development opportunities, and provide a social setting in which they enjoy working. In a key study by Darling-Hammond (2003) threatening contextual factors for resilience are mentioned including salaries, teacher preparation, working conditions and mentoring support in the early years, factors that are also relevant for the Dutch context. Schelvis et al. (2014) explain that large class sizes, dysfunctional equipment, work-place harassment and low

administrative support all contribute to the teacher's sense of poor working conditions. Finally, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2007) point out that new teachers, who are strongly influenced by contextual factors, have successful teaching moments in a school environment that is positive, participatory and collegial.

This research seeks to investigate stories of individual ECTs about obstacles and factors that interfere with their resilience. It is a small-scale in depth research study that will examine resilience in particular school contexts in the Netherlands. It aims to identify experiences, strategies and factors impacting on ECTs' resilience and therefore a comprehensive framework was required, as a starting point for the discussion about ECTs' resilience. Inspired by a study by Johnson et al. (2012) on Australian teachers (See *Appendix 1*), this research will refer to their theoretical framework to explore personal and contextual factors that contribute to changes in ECTs' resilience. Johnson et al.'s work led to the development of a *Framework of Conditions Supporting Early Career Teacher Resilience* (Johnson et al., 2014: 546). This framework should enable the researcher to focus on how the ECTs' "capacity for … successful adaptation" (Masten et al., 1990: 425) was supported and enhanced. Johnson et al. developed five domains and 18 related conditions that make up the framework. The first three domains deal with contextual factors: *policies & practices, teachers' work,* and *school culture* and the final two domains deal with personal factors: *relationships* and *teacher identity*. Within this research, these domains provide the theoretical framework for an exploration of what personal and contextual factors contribute to changes in Dutch ECTs' resilience.

This research will examine an important issue that remains relatively unexplored in the research literature in the Netherlands: the stories of ECTs who stay in teaching (Helms-Lorenz et al., 2013). The purpose is to build on the conceptual framework developed by Johnson et al. (2014: 546), based on five domains. In the next section, teacher effectiveness and why this is relevant to this research will be critically reviewed.

2.2 Teacher Effectiveness

In their most recent research on resilience, Day and Gu (2014) focus on what day-to-day experiences enabled or inhibited ECTs' resilience, this included the ECTs' optimism and

sense of effectiveness in the profession. They point out that there are "significant associations between teachers' sense of resilience and their effectiveness, as perceived by themselves as well as measured by the progress of their students' academic outcomes" (pp. 12-13). Importantly, schools should not be interested in retaining all ECTs but only in retaining effective ECTs.

> It is imperative that schools find effective ways to retain teachers, but it is neither possible nor necessarily desirable to retain all teachers (Scheopner, 2010: 262).

The challenge for teacher education seems to be how to help ECTs become effective teachers as was discussed in Chapter 1. Therefore a critical discussion of what is meant by teacher effectiveness is required.

Park and Lee (2006) identified 15 characteristics for effective teachers in research carried out by the American Association for School Administration (AASA):

> These characteristics were found among teachers who tended to be good managers, use systematic instruction techniques, have expectations of students and themselves, believe in their own efficacy, vary teaching strategies, handle discipline through prevention, are caring, are democratic in their approach, are task-oriented, are concerned with perpetual meanings rather than with facts and events, are comfortable interacting with others, have a strong grasp of subject matter, are accessible to students outside of class, tailor teaching to students needs, are flexible and imaginative. (ibid.: 237)

What makes this list interesting is that it includes looking at the characteristics of effective teachers from different perspectives: the teachers' relationship with the students, teacher content knowledge, teaching strategies, personal attributes of the teachers and teachers' self concept. The focus of many studies related to teacher effectiveness has increasingly moved towards respecting the learners and their feelings (Biddle, 2005; Hoy & Spero, 2005; Flores & Day, 2006; Day & Gu, 2014). Based on an extensive and systematic review of literature Goe et al. (2008) developed a five-point definition of teacher effectiveness. Effective teachers are identified as:

- having high expectations for all the students and helping students learn;
- contributing to positive academic, attitudinal, and social outcomes for students;
- using diverse resources to plan and structure engaging learning opportunities;

- contributing to the development of classrooms and schools that value diversity and civic-mindedness;
- collaborating with other teachers, administrators, parents, and educational professionals to ensure student success. (p.8)

Goe et al. explain that the first point directly addresses student achievement gains on standardized tests, which is by no means the most important criterion. In fact student achievement is just one of the criteria and all the other criteria should be given equal importance as they focus on teachers' contributions "that may ultimately improve student learning, albeit indirectly" (Goe et al., ibid.). For the purpose of this research, effective teachers are defined as "those who have the necessary knowledge and competences to engage pupils, cause them to learn and achieve the limits of their potential and beyond and involve in them a love of learning" (Day & Gu, 2014: 66). Importantly, effectiveness involves both ECTs' perceptions of their own effectiveness and how ECTs make an impact on pupils' progress and attainments. ECTs' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions have direct and serious implications for the success of the pupils they teach and should not be reduced to a value added score or an observation or both (Kyriakides et al., 2009; Van de Grift & Helms-Lorenz, 2013).

Going back to Johnson's et al.'s (2014) *Framework of Conditions Supporting ECT Resilience* these above-mentioned characteristics tie in with Johnson et al.'s personal and contextual factors. In fact, all five characteristics are referred to in the domain *"relationships"*. They include the related conditions for promoting "a sense of belonging, acceptance and wellbeing", placing "student-teacher relationships at the heart of the teaching-learning process" and fostering "professional growth" (p. 546).

According to Hattie (2003) there have been many lists of what makes an effective teacher, but too few have been based on evidence from classrooms, particularly considering the effects on student learning. Hattie includes the criteria for learning and effective outcomes, respect and caring, and quality of achievement. Additionally, he warns us that we work on the assumption that all teachers are equal whereas his research clearly points out that expert teachers do differ from novices, particularly in the way "they represent their classrooms, the degree of challenges they represent to students, and most critically in the depth of processing that their students attain" (Hattie, 2003: 15). Similar to Kyriakides (2009) and Van de Grift and Helms-Lorenz (2013), Hattie warns us

to distinguish between the ECTs and expert teachers as expert teachers are more efficient in planning and more selective in information processing than novice teachers. Hattie (2009) contends that a key difference between experts and novices is that "it is a deliberative practice rather than experience that matters" (p. 30), which means extensive engagement in relevant practice activities to improve teaching performance. Hattie (ibid.) explains deliberate practice by means of swimmers who "swim lap after lap aiming to over learn the key aspects of their strokes, turns and breathing" (p. 30). According to Hattie there is a difference between teacher experience and teacher expertise. The question relevant for this research could be how to move from one to the other, or indeed how to achieve expertise as an ECT?

Experienced teacher educators do not seem to come to an agreement about what is meant by a good or effective teacher. Is an effective teacher a person who "helps children's socio-emotional development, or who helps their cognitive development, or who teaches them subject knowledge or who gets them through examinations" (Fontana, 1995: 383). Many governments use the notion of teacher effectiveness as a means of control (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD, 2005; Day & Gu, 2014). The standards for teacher evaluation are set sometimes regardless of what research supports and teachers are assessed against these pre-set criteria (OECD, 2009, 2016a; Van de Grift & Helms-Lorenz, 2013). Often the problem of how to deal with ineffective ECTs is not addressed either, which causes difficulties not only for teacher educators and secondary schools but also for the underperforming teachers themselves (Wang & Fwu, 2007; Ministerie van OCW, 2012, 2013, 2015; Van der Rijst et al., 2015). Among the criteria of selecting suitable candidates for teacher education, the most commonly held criterion is academic ability. Many TEC programmes set a minimum academic ability as threshold for application, which is also the case in the Netherlands. The non-academic capabilities deemed important for teacher education students including motivation, strong interpersonal and communication skills, and resilience (Mansfield et al., 2016b) are not part of the selection criteria (TEC internal documents, 2016).

Research points out that there needs to be a transparent and accepted procedure for dealing with ineffective ECTs (Heinz, 2013; Snoek et al., 2014). More rigorous approaches to selection and probation before ECTs are granted tenure, and regular formative teacher evaluation will help to prevent poor ECTs from remaining in the

profession. However, the initial focus of the TEC needs to be on their performance and giving constructive feedback to ECTs. Providing adequate developmental strategies to ECTs seems a vital support so that they may develop the capacity for resilience, which is defined as "successful adaptation despite challenging circumstances" (Masten et al., op. cit.). Therefore the first research question will address the kinds of experiences that contribute to changes in the ECTs' resilience and the follow-up research question addresses the strategies they employ. Subsequently, the mediating factors such as personal and contextual factors will be analysed as they are central to an understanding of what causes variations in ECTs' professional lives and effectiveness (Day et al., 2007).

Being an effective teacher is more than having content knowledge, which is necessary for all teachers whether novice or experienced. Of course, content knowledge must not be underestimated but it is more pedagogical knowledge that is important, the way that knowledge is used in teaching situations (Van de Grift & Helms-Lorenz, 2013). Furthermore, being an effective teacher is more than the contributions that teachers can make to students' achievements in tests (Timperley et al., 2007; Goe et al., 2008; Biesta, 2010, 2014). Clearly the definitions of terms presented above differ somewhat between researchers and so discrepancies do exist. In sum, teacher resilience and its associations with teacher effectiveness seems to indicate that the way in which ECTs build their resilience is very much context specific and multidimensional (Ungar, 2008; Day & Gu, 2014).

In the Netherlands, Van de Grift (2010) has composed a list of teacher competences that starts with basic skills and moves up to higher skills. The basic skills comprise creating a safe learning environment, efficient lesson planning and progress with more advanced skills such as clear and structured instructions to teaching effective strategies and engaging pupils (Van de Grift & Helms-Lorenz, 2013; researcher's translation). These competences deal with general pedagogical skills and therefore seem relevant for the critical discussion of the ECTs' portfolios, one of the data sets of this research. The research undertaken by Van de Grift and his colleagues seems an interesting example of our culture of accountability in teaching as the list with 35 competences is used to assess ECTs in their classroom practice.

In their recent research, Day and Gu (2014) point out that support from the school Management together with collegiality contributes to teachers' sense of effectiveness. Significantly, teachers who had been working for four to seven years "felt that their identity, efficacy and effectiveness were at risk because of workload and difficult life events" (p. 71), which seems to be relevant for this research. Their study was part of the professional life phase research, which will be further critically discussed in the next section.

2.3 Developmental Stages of a Teacher

When investigating the ECTs' reflections in their portfolios and interviews, it is essential to understand the ECTs' career cycle because they come from three different cohorts and are unqualified. The first cohort consists of four long term ECTs, who have taught for more than six years as EFL teachers. The second cohort are four regular ECTs, who have taught for more than three years and the third cohort are four students newly enrolled in the TEC. Even though there has been research on teachers' careers that focused on age, Day and Gu (2007) note that they have not taken into account factors "independent of age and career and therefore are limited in their ability to explain the complexity of teacher professional life development" (p. 433). Day and Gu suggest that research in teachers' lives "has ignored the impact of the interaction between professional and personal contexts" (ibid.). This research seeks to investigate how personal and contextual factors impact on ECTs' resilience coming from three different cohorts. To be able to explore the different career stages, this research will refer to the developmental model presented in the Variations in Teachers' Lives, Work and Effectiveness (VITAE) research by Day et al. (2006).

The ECTs are probably to experience different issues in different professional life phases. The ways in which they and their managers are able to cope with these are possibly "to affect their job satisfaction and fulfilment" (Day & Gu, 2014: 68). The participants of this research not only come from three different cohorts but are also based in twelve different urban schools so it will be possible to establish links between their professional life phase and the development of their resilience in different contexts. The VITAE research builds on Huberman's (1989) study on the lives of Swiss secondary school teachers (See

Appendix 6). The VITAE research project proposes a six-phase teaching career cycle within a non-linear schematic model. It should be noted that all participants have less experience than might be expected for their ages as many of them are late entrants to EFL teaching. Day et al. (2006) state that it is possible to "discern distinctive key influences … and effectiveness pathways or trajectories relevant to most teachers in different phases of their careers" (p. 85). The three key influences identified by the VITAE project as shaping the teachers' professional lives were:

> "i) *situated factors* such as pupil characteristics, site-based leadership and staff collegiality; ii) *professional factors* such as teachers' roles and responsibilities and educational policies and government initiatives; iii) *personal factors* (personal level) such as health issues and family support and demands" (Day et al., 2006: 85).

They found that "commitment and resilience influence, and are influenced by, professional life phase and identity which, in turn, are affected by personal, situated and professional influences" (ibid.: xviii). They concluded that teachers' work and lives span six professional life phases, as can be seen in *Figure 2*. The first three life phases 0-3, 4-7 and 8-15 will be relevant to this research. Below are the VITAE research professional life phases.

Professional life phase	Years	Characteristics	Subgroups
1	0-3	Commitment: support and challenge	(1) Developing sense of efficacy or (2) reduced sense of efficacy
2	4-7	Identity and efficacy in classroom	(1) Sustaining a strong sense of identity, self-efficacy and effectiveness or (2) sustaining identity, efficacy and effectiveness or (3) identity, efficacy and effectiveness at risk
3	8-15	Managing changes in role and identity: growing tensions and transitions	(1) Sustained engagement or (2) detachment/ loss of motivation
4	16-23	Work-life tensions: challenges to motivation and commitment	(1) Further career advancement and good pupil results have led to increased motivation/ commitment or (2) sustained motivation, commitment and effectiveness or (3) workload/managing competing tensions/ career stagnation have led to decreased motivation, commitment and effectiveness.
5	24-30	Challenges to sustaining motivation	(1) Sustained a strong sense of motivation and commitment or (2) holding on but losing motivation
6	31+	Sustaining/ declining motivation, ability to cope with change, looking to retire	(1) Maintaining commitment (2) tired and trapped

Figure 2: based on "professional life phases" by Day and Gu, (2014: 70-74)

Day and Gu (2014) found that teachers do not necessarily become more effective as they grow older. They show that teachers in the early professional life phases (0-3 and 4-7) are more likely to be effective than their colleagues in the middle and later professional life phases. For example, the 8-15 years phase is where "teachers face growing tensions in managing their professional and personal lives" (ibid.: xii). This finding has a profound implication for teacher retention. Importantly, most of the ECTs in this research belong to the first two groups. Previous research (European Commission, 2012; Ingersoll & Perda, 2012) shows that ECTs are more likely to leave the profession in their first five years of teaching. Day and Gu's (2014) research suggests that a large proportion of these teachers, however, are likely to be effective teachers as indicated by their pupils' progress and attainment. Retaining effective ECTs will thus have a significant impact on the quality of the teaching force.

2.4 Professional Learning

The broader perspective that informs this research is adult professional learning supporting ECTs' resilience. The particular focus is on professional learning of part-time ECTs, aged 25 and upward. Johnson's et al.'s (2012) *Framework of Conditions Supporting ECT Resilience* refers to professional learning as providing "support to create engaging learning environments" (p. 5) and "more specific and practical learning activities that address the most commonly reported challenges faced by beginning teachers" (p. 20). They state that ECTs experience a steep learning curve in their first years of teaching and require deliberate and on-going support from other members of the profession. It is difficult to believe that a phenomenon as complex as adult professional learning will ever be explained by a single theory or a particular model. There are a variety of factors that affect adult professional learning in any particular situation. In the United States of America (USA) in the early 1970s Knowles et al. (1989, 2012) explored whether adults and children learn differently. Knowles and his colleagues suggest six core adult professional learning principles.

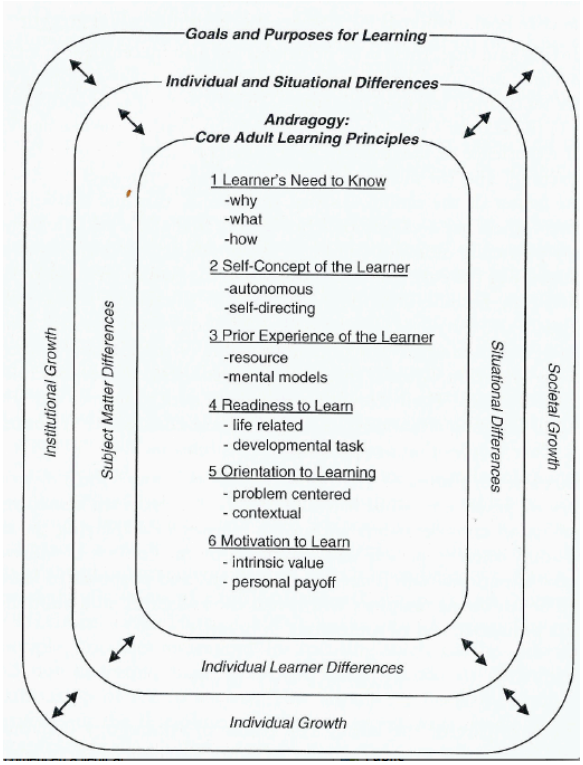


Figure 3, Knowles et al., (2012: 147)

As the three research questions will address the kinds of experiences, the strategies employed by the ECTs followed by the specific personal and contextual factors that impact on their resilience, the two outer circles in the model by Knowles et al. that deal with individual and situational differences and goals and purposes for learning seem to be relevant. In fact, *Figure 3* is a way of schematising the core adult learning principles, which can all be related to Johnson et al.'s (2014) framework of resilience. In the centre of the model there are the six core principles that deal, for example, with the self-concept of adults that is heavily dependent upon a move toward self-direction (2) or an adult's motivation to learn that is internal rather than external (6). Johnson et al. refer to this when they discuss an ECT's identity, which is about the development of one's awareness and understanding of self as a teacher. The participants of this research were all accepted onto the teacher education course after their academic ability was established, followed by an intake session during which the learning content was described and learning strategies were discussed, but no further assessment took place. The majority of the ECTs decided to become EFL teachers as a change of career, because they felt uninspired in their previous jobs or looked for another challenge (See the vignettes in *Appendix 8*). The TEC tries to engage these students as collaborative partners "for learning satisfies their

need to know as well as appeals to their self-concept as independent learners" (Knowles et al., 2012: 181).

The prior experience of the learner (3) seems to be the most relevant to the research and will be further investigated in the interviews and portfolios to explain the link with Johnson et al.'s (2014) framework of resilience, in particular how teacher resilience is enhanced when ECTs engage in a process of self-reflection. How can the ECTs' wider experience serve to shape or inhibit new learning, and how can their prior experience play a role in their professional training to become an EFL teacher? This pertains to the first research question that deals with the kinds of experiences that the ECTs encounter in their first years. Also in the vignettes, biographical details will be presented explaining the background of the twelve ECTs.

In this research, professional learning is defined as "ownership over compliance, conversation over transmission, deep understanding over enacting rules and routines, and goal-directed activity over content coverage" (Martin et al., 2014: 147). Professional learning often begins by engaging teachers and results in an ownership and shared understanding of the process according to Martin et al.. Professional learning should be situated as teachers address meaningful problems of practice within their particular school context. Similarly, Day et al. (2006), previously discussed, state that there should be "situational factors such as … site-based leadership and collegiality" (p. 85). It values active engagement, creation and collaboration, teacher voice and reflection (Zepeda, 2012; Zepeda et al., 2014). The *one size fits all* sessions that sometimes take place at schools are referred to as "going on a course and a means to provide quick fix solutions" (Keay & Lloyd, 2011: 9). Both the second and the third research question, which pertain to strategies and contextual factors impacting on ECTs' resilience, will address how professional learning contributes to changes in their resilience.

As the TEC curriculum divides theoretical from practical courses, the three conceptions of teacher professional learning distinguished by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) seem to be relevant to this research. The first conception is the *knowledge-for-practice* approach, which emphasizes "teachers' learning of knowledge that is already known by someone else" (p. 268). It builds on the formal knowledge - practical knowledge distinction. The second conception is the *knowledge-in-practice* approach, which refers to

teachers' narrative accounts of practice by reflecting on day-to-day practice. Knowledge is "produced in the activity of teaching itself" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999: 273). The third conception is the *knowledge-of-practice* approach, which entails generating knowledge of practice by making classrooms sites for inquiry in which teachers collaboratively search for "what works" by studying literature, experimenting and innovating in the classroom, and building the "body of knowledge" together. The second and the third conception seem to be relevant for the analysis of the ECTs' reflections in the interviews and portfolios.

ECTs' learning is defined as making use of the more or less implicit knowledge about what works in teaching by reflecting on what is going on in the classroom, which refers to the knowledge-in-practice approach. This knowledge comes from reflexive practice, either individually or in "dyadic situations (as in exchanges between an expert and a less experienced or less expert teacher)" (ibid.: 268). This approach is in line with research on adult learning (Merriam, 2001; Eraut, 1994, 2004; Knowles, et al., 2012) and regards the workplace as an important potential learning situation.

The third conception that is *knowledge-of-practice* assumes that ECTs collaboratively research for "what works" by studying literature, experimenting and innovating the classroom and therefore finding ways to successfully adapt "despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (Masten et al., op. cit.). This third conception emphasizes images of teachers as "agency in the classroom and in larger educational contexts" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999: 276). Knowledge is constructed by the ECTs themselves in local or broader networks. Professional networks are seen as a tool for school reform, where ECTs learn in interaction with each other, face-to-face or virtually, by studying practical problems (Verbiest, 2004). TECs and schools are required to work together as partners, which leads to renewal within the schools and within the teacher-education programmes (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Moore & Shaw, 2000; Wenger & Snyder, 2000; Roelofs, 2005). This will have further implications for the programme offered to the students enrolled at the Dutch TECs (Bezzina et al., 2009; Kan, 2014). Changes taking place at the TECs include addressing fundamental questions such as "how do we share roles and responsibilities between schools and TECs and what competences are needed in schools" (Snoek & Wielenga, 2001: 40).

Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) third conception *knowledge-of-practice* carries the assumption that "through inquiry teachers across the professional life span – from very new to very experienced – make problematic their own knowledge and practice as well as the knowledge and practice of others" (p. 273). This research will focus on ECTs and not (very) experienced teachers. The ECTs will problematize their classroom issues in their portfolios, which will form part of their stories of resilience.

Argyris (1982) and Schön (1987) have done extensive research about the difficulties and importance of overcoming the tendency to resist new learning. Argyris describes learning as either single loop or double loop learning. Single loop learning is learning that fits prior experience, which enables the ECTs to respond automatically. Double loop learning requires ECTs to change their mental schema in a fundamental way. To become more effective ECTs, they have to become better double-loop learners in Argyris' terms. Schön would label this as *reflection-in-action*, as the ECTs need to reflect while teaching to discover when existing schema are no longer appropriate, and changing those schema when necessary. Thus, ECTs' experiences have a very important impact on the learning process. Kolb (1984) points out that learning is a continuous process grounded in experience, which means that all learning can be seen as unlearning. This is particularly true for the ECTs in this research as they have such a large "reservoir of life experiences that is a rich resource for learning" (Merriam, 2001: 5), which relates back to the prior experience of the learner (3) in *Figure 4* of Knowles et al. (2012: 18). As noted earlier, the majority of the ECTs have obtained previous qualifications and had previous jobs, before they enrolled at the TEC (See vignettes in *Appendix 8*). In the Netherlands, TECs are in the process of designing tailor made part-time B.Ed. courses (Kan, 2014; internal documents TEC, 2016). Prospective students will be given an intake procedure in which previous acquired certificates and work experiences will be reviewed as part of an assessment procedure, this may result in personalised trajectories.

Huisman et al. (2010) seek to understand why first and second year urban teachers persist in the classroom. Specifically, the researchers wanted to find out what characteristics and supports ECTs perceived to be important to their own resilience. As the second research question addresses what kinds of strategies contribute to changes in ECTs' resilience and the third addresses the factors that impact on ECTs' resilience, Huisman et al.'s research

informed the interview questions of this research (*Appendix 3 & 5*). ECTs actively seek out professional learning formally and informally according to Huisman et al..

> As teachers seek answers to the questions they have, they look to experts and both formal and informal opportunities to learn new strategies for classroom management and curriculum implementation to be successful in their classroom (p. 494).

Findings were divided into seven themes: significant adult relationships, mentoring others, problem-solving, hope, high expectations, sociocultural awareness, and professional learning. The above-mentioned themes seem to be relevant to the critical discussion of ECTs' resilience in a Dutch context. They inform this research when discussing the "outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" Masten et al.'s (1990: 425) definition of resilience.

Following Martin et al.'s (2014) definition of professional learning, it appears that teacher learning is embedded in everyday classroom activities. Kwakman (2003) states "teachers perceive professional learning activities in connection with different tasks that belong to the teaching profession" (p.166). She suggests activities such as active and self-regulated information gathering, and joint preparation of lessons and materials. When focusing on the specific Dutch context, there has been a call for new professional learning programmes (Kwakman, 2003; Van Eekelen et al. 2006). If ECTs need to comply with new standards, then it follows that teachers in general and therefore also ECTs need to acquire this new perspective on teaching as well. In a similar vein, Kwakman (ibid.) contends that "as a result of this new view on teaching, practising teachers have to learn new ways of teaching" (p. 150). She refers to a research model including personal factors and work environment factors that impact on "participation in professional learning activities" (p. 158), very similar to Johnson et al.'s (2014) framework of resilience. One of her research findings is that from the teachers' perspective "learning may be best examined in connection to teachers' concrete tasks and daily activities" (p. 166). This research will indeed be context specific, as it concentrates on how personal and contextual factors impact on resilience focusing on a group of beginning EFL teachers.

2.4.1 The Role of Reflection in Professional Learning

The participants of this research all attend the same TEC and are trained to apply a core reflection approach based on the onion model of Korthagen (2004), when writing their portfolios, presented in *Figure 4*. It is assumed that their stories of resilience will be built along these levels of reflection.

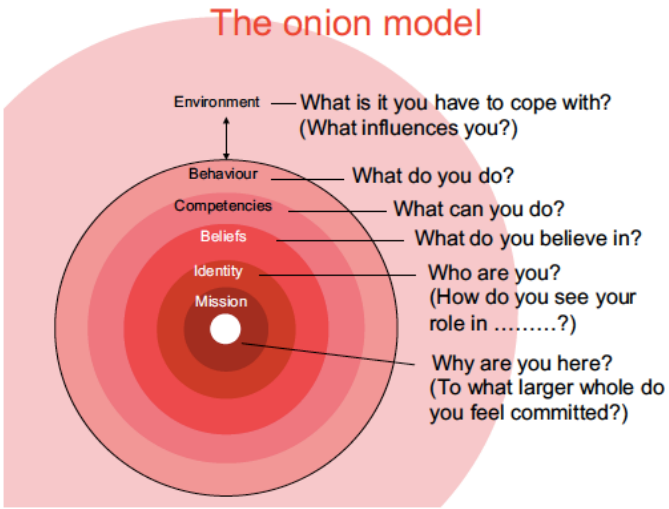


Figure 4, The onion model, Korthagen (2004) and Meijer et al. (2009)

Korthagen (2004) proposed a model that highlights different stages of a teacher reflection referred to as the core reflection approach. Professional behaviour becomes more effective and also more fulfilling if connected with the deeper layers within a person. In the onion model six of such layers are distinguished: (1) environment, (2) behaviour, (3) competences, (4) beliefs, (5) identity, and (6) personal mission. *Figure 4* also shows the questions that are related to each of the six layers.

> "The aim of core reflection is to promote alignment between the onion layers, which means that the behaviour represents a harmonious connection between the 'inside' (the inner layers) and the 'outside' (the environment)" (Meijer et al., 2009: 299).

It supposes that ECTs can reflect on external and internal aspects. The two internal layers represent the ECTs' mission and professional identity. These layers seem to be more resistant to change because they figure deeper in the teacher. The external layer refers to the environmental level elements such as pupils, colleagues and resources. All these

external and internal layers are interrelated and influence each other, but significantly there is no hierarchy. A resilient teacher would be able to create a coherent balance between these layers (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005, 2010: Meijer et al., 2009). This type of reflection also builds on positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) as it focuses on strengths rather than problems. "A central focus in positive psychology is the idea that people can use their personal qualities to optimally act in the world, so that their actions are both effective and personally fulfilling" (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2010: 536). The focus on awareness of emotional and motivational aspects in addition to cognitive awareness is characteristic of the core reflection approach, relevant for this research.

Teacher reflection is essential in professional learning processes, in order to fully understand how the ECTs are educated to identify internal obstacles they might have, when trying to act out these core qualities. Leroux and Théorêt (2014) point out that developing reflective skills is an important personal resource and strategy enhancing teacher resilience. ECTs should be made aware of any disharmony between the onion layers by their mentor and/or teacher educators. These dimensions are not static, ECTs will experience fluctuations within and between them which will affect their professional identities. Similarly, Day and Gu (2010) point out that factors are interrelated and influence each other: "the social construction of teacher resilience acknowledges … the importance of such combinations of personal, professional and situated factors on their capacities to sustain their emotional and professional commitment" (p. 158). This research aims to identify possible personal and contextual factors that ECTs may need to exhibit resilience in the field of Dutch education.

2.5 Concluding Remarks

In this section, all four strands of the literature review come together, the concept of resilience, teachers' effectiveness, developmental stages and teacher professional learning. In developing an overall understanding of resilience, it has been necessary to first discuss adults and resilience and then move to teachers and resilience. Masten et al.'s (1990) definition of resilience, i.e. "the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (p. 425) has been central to

the discussion of teacher effectiveness and professional learning. Conceptualising resilience as an *outcome, a process and capacity* allows for a discussion of ECTs' resilience in a Dutch context by first addressing the ECTs' experiences, followed by their strategies and their personal and contextual factors impacting on their resilience. Furthermore, Johnson et al.'s (2014) framework informed the original thinking and planning of the research to a great extent. Their framework and research findings seem to be interesting for this research, because they focus on the interaction between personal and contextual factors, which may influence an ECT's resilience, and also the various possible endings of the transition process of becoming a fully qualified EFL teacher.

In Day and Gu's (2014) VITAE project about professional life phases the ECTs are depicted as moving through particular meaningful incidents, which can share certain characteristics as time progresses. As discussed previously, teachers' effectiveness is neither simply a consequence of age or experience nor is professional learning seen as a linear process (Borko, 2004). Day and Gu's first three life phases seem relevant to this investigation as the ECTs belong to three different cohorts. This research is intended to illuminate different themes addressing ECTs' resilience, and it seeks to discover whether similar processes, as discussed above, operate in the Netherlands.

It appears that teachers are influenced in their professional learning by the particularities of the school context, both in time and space. Reflection is an integral part of the pedagogical practice at the TEC. By means of Korthagen's (2004) core reflection model ECTs are trained to write their portfolios during their traineeships. Both in their reflective stories and written portfolios, ECTs are expected to identify areas for improvement and growth in their professional contexts. Together with the twelve ECTs the researcher will build their stories of resilience, when reading and listening to their reflections about their contextualised experiences.

The next chapter critically discusses the methodology and the design of this study, including the methods of data collection and data analysis.

Chapter Three

3. Methodology and Design

3.1 The Nature of Enquiry

This research employs Masten et al.'s definition of resilience "the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (1990: 425). Resilience conceptualised in this way is seen as a human capacity that can be developed and strengthened. It is hoped that by conducting qualitative research using semi-structured interviews it will be possible to investigate how the ECTs perceive and interpret personal and contextual factors concerning their resilience, as they work towards becoming more competent EFL teachers.

In this chapter issues relating to carrying out qualitative research will be first critically discussed, followed by an exploration of the specific research approach, research population, and research design, next data collection methods, analysis methods and finally ethical considerations. The nature of this research demands a qualitative approach in order to first identify and then analyse ECTs' perceptions about resilience. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) see qualitative research as a "field of enquiry in its own right" (p. 2). Qualitative research is intended to produce rich data, which can be interrogated to provide real information about lived experience (Cohen et al., 2011; Gilbert & Stoneman, 2016). The relevance of the findings to others working in EFL education or experiencing the same phase of early teaching will be discussed. It is the researcher's intention to listen to the ECTs' reflections, analyse their portfolios and together with the ECTs build their stories of resilience.

The nature of the research questions should guide the choice of the research design, whether it is qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative research is particularly appropriate to answer *How?* or *What?* questions (Morrow, 2007; Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research is also designed to study the "experiential life of people" (Polkinghorne, 2005: 138). "A primary purpose of qualitative research is to describe and clarify experience as it is lived and constituted in awareness" according to Polkinghorne (ibid.). In this research, this

entails the teaching experiences of ECTs as they see them, and the stories they build around these experiences. Using a qualitative approach, it is possible to discuss the depths of teaching experiences so that the ECTs are able to reflect situated contexts, issues and concerns. This data "cannot be gathered using survey or other data gathering strategies" (Morrow, 2007: 211). Qualitative approaches present a detailed and in-depth view of a phenomenon in a more narrative form, which means that the outcome and results may be more accessible and convincing in general for a larger audience (Creswell, 2013). Finally, qualitative research can be used to identify possible interventions in schools as well as to contribute to social change (Morrow, 2007). This methodology seems appropriate, as this research is designed to address how induction practices and teacher education programmes may be modified, changed and developed to better assist in catering for the needs of ECTs, as stated in the research objectives (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Kidd et al., 2015).

This research, therefore, will employ qualitative methodology as its aim is to study

> "people and their social worlds by going there, observing them closely, in their natural settings, and learning how they understand their situations and account for their behaviour" (Richards, 2015: 1).

It may be expected that personal factors and perceptions of contexts will vary between the ECTs because of the complex, dynamic ways that various characteristics work together (Beltman et al., 2011).

The research fits a social constructivist worldview, which is another justification for a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2013). The social constructivist assumes that individuals develop meaning from their life experience and that these meanings may vary between individuals. A social constructivist researcher seeks to understand the complexities of views through an understanding of the specific contexts (ibid.), in this case twelve different secondary schools in the Netherlands. The intention is to critically analyse how certain life and work experiences have contributed to ECTs' resilience. Reality is constructed in the mind of the individual and the output of qualitative research represents an amalgamation of the researcher's and the ECTs' subjective realities arrived at through "their interactive dialogue and interpretation" (Ponterotto, 2005: 129). The stories are

personal to each ECT and the interviews will disclose multiple and varying perspectives on resilience.

Social constructivism has often been described as interpretivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, 2013; Mertens, 2010 as cited in Creswell, 2013). The interpretative researcher's ontological assumption is that social reality is locally and specifically constructed by humans through their actions and interactions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Andrade (2009) contends that "interpretative research assumes that the reality is socially constructed and the researcher becomes the vehicle by which this reality is revealed" (p. 43). This research will be facilitated by these interpretivist assumptions, because investigating resilient teachers' strategies for coping with day-to-day teaching in Dutch schools requires engaging with, understanding of and reporting multiple realities (Creswell, 2013).

The research is exploratory in nature, it is not aimed at verifying hypotheses or testing Johnson et al.'s (2014) framework and it seeks knowledge viewed as "personal, subjective and unique" (Cohen et al., 2011: 6). This will influence how data is collected and analysed. As with Cohen et al., the researcher believes "the alternative view of social reality stresses the importance of the subjective experience of individuals in the creation of the social world" (ibid.). The main aim is to elicit personal, subjective and unique stories of "successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (Masten et al., op. cit.).

3.2 Case Study Approach

This research follows a case study approach, as it will employ some of the features of case study research. This section will first explore the multiple definitions of case study to critically discuss the methodology. One of the common forms of qualitative research is the case study (Verschuren, 2003; Creswell, 2013). Case studies focus on a particular situation, social unit or entity, event, programme or phenomenon. A case study tends to be concerned with the investigation of a bounded, integrated system (Stake, 2008; Yin, 2014). According to Denscombe (2014), case studies try to "understand the complex relationship between factors as they operate within a particular setting" (p. 4). The author

also states “it is crucial that the thing to be studied has some distinctive identity that allows it to be studied in isolation from its context” (p. 54). A case needs to be a fairly self-contained entity and needs to have fairly distinctive boundaries. Miles et al. (2014) contend that a case study is “a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context” (p. 28). In this research, the unit of analysis will be the particular ECT, the phenomenon will refer to resilience, and the context will be the first years of EFL teaching at a particular school in the Netherlands.

The use of case study research means conducting an empirical investigation of “a contemporary phenomenon within its natural context using multiple sources of evidence” (Yin, 2003: 2). Yin (2014) offers a very straightforward protocol for case study emphasizing field procedures, case study questions, and a guide for the final write up. This protocol seeks to 1) assist the researcher to carry out the case study and 2) increase reliability of the investigation. This research is not intended to be case study research but it will employ some of its characteristics and methods. It draws on the organisational features of case study research. It will use the notion of cases to organise and analyse the data collected from each of the twelve ECTs. Each ECT will be regarded as a discrete and distinct case.

The advantage of a case study approach is that it may focus on real-life situations, and test views directly in relation to the phenomenon of resilience in a school practice. This research will provide a unique example of twelve ECTs “in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles” (Cohen et al., 2011: 289). In fact, the researcher will not look at the whole person, but only at their ideas about what it is to be a beginning teacher. Furthermore, the research sets out to include a developmental aspect of the twelve cases, as there will be at least nine months in between the two interviews. The researcher organised the cases in three different cohorts, referring back to the enrolment year of the ECTs. The three cohorts will be analysed to see whether the participants “fall into clusters or groups that share certain patterns” (Miles et al., 2014: 103).

Following Stake’s (2008) notion that case study researchers seek “the particular more than the ordinary” (p. 125), the stories of resilience are organised around a small number

of research questions. The case study aims "to develop what is perceived to be the case's own issues, contexts, and interpretations, its thick description" (Stake, 2008: 128). The ECTs in this research will elaborate upon their critical incidents after having drawn their story lines, and together with the researcher they will build their stories of resilience from within their own contexts. The story of each ECT will be given value in a vignette, presented in *Appendix 8.* The vignettes are set up as a tool to build the cases around the twelve ECTs and they briefly present biographical data. Each vignette is built around a specific strategy employed by the ECT as a response to a critical incident. The ECTs' personal definition of resilience is also included.

This research will first organise and analyse the data collected from twelve ECTs and next their individual stories of resilience will be built around twelve individual cases. The focus is "a qualitative concentration on the case" (ibid.: 119). Johnson et al.'s *Framework of Conditions Supporting ECT Resilience* (2014: 546) will be used as a starting point to analyse how the resilience of twelve ECTs in a Dutch context may be fostered. It is the researcher's task to "describe the case in sufficient descriptive narrative so that the readers can experience these happenings vicariously" (Stake, 2008: 129).

3.3 Research Population

The participants will be selected through purposeful or snowball sampling techniques, because they are valid members of a certain group (Seidman, 2006). This means that judgements will have to be made based on both theoretical and practical considerations. Thus, a certain type of ECT with a certain knowledge will be included in the research (Cohen et al., 2011).

The researcher will handpick twelve ECTs coming from three different cohorts. Two criteria will guide the selection of participants: 1) having been a trainee teacher for a period of at least 3 months, and 2) currently still a part-time student enrolled in a four-year undergraduate teacher education programme at a particular TEC in the south of the Netherlands. As discussed above, the term ECTs refers to unqualified teachers who are still in the process of doing their initial teacher education. From the pool of possible candidates, twelve ECTs will be selected. Each year about 60 part-time trainee teachers

enrol and after 4 years 25 of them graduate. One third drops out and 15 take longer than 4 years. In 2016 there were 23 long-term part-time ECTs enrolled in the department of English (internal documents TEC). Throughout the research each participant will be referred to by a pseudonym and whenever necessary, any information that may jeopardize confidentiality will be changed. *Table 1* presents the names allocated to the cases.

Cohort 1	4 long term ECTs	Merlin, Cheryl, Ralph and Adrian
Cohort 2	4 regular ECTs	Vera, Miriam, Florence and Linda
Cohort 3	4 beginning ECTs	Alice, Dorothy, Rachel and Trudy

Table 1: Names allocated to the twelve cases

All participants teach in urban schools as opposed to rural or suburban schools. McLaughlin and Talbert (2006) show that the local school context is a powerful setting where teachers' practice, professional values and commitments are shaped.

Denscombe (2014) suggests that

> "Purposive sampling works where the researcher already knows something about the specific people or events and deliberately selects particular ones because they are seen as instances that are likely to produce the most valuable data. They are selected with a specific purpose in mind, and that purpose reflects the particular qualities of the people or events chosen and their relevance to the topic of the investigation" (p. 41).

The sampling of the ECTs does not pretend to represent a wider population. It is as Cohen et al. (2011) note "deliberately and unashamedly selective and biased" (p. 157).

This research is set in the real life context of twelve beginning unqualified teachers, with a focus on interpretations and meaning of their teaching experiences. Qualitative research can provide rich description of the concept resilience together with human details for the findings of the research. It aims to understand the meaning for participants of the critical incidents discussed, the teaching moments in which the ECTs are involved and the context in which these occur.

These twelve ECTs with their own uniqueness "only represent themselves, and nothing or nobody else" (Cohen et al., 2011: 161). The within-cohort sampling will be "nested"

(Miles et al.: 2014: 33), which means that the participants belonging to a particular cohort will at the same time be seen as individual cases. The ECTs are grouped together because they taught EFL for more than six years (cohort 1), more than three years (cohort 2) and less than two years (cohort 3). See also *Figure 1* in Chapter 1.

3.4 Research Design

The research design is "the network of steps a researcher takes to conduct a research project" (Krippendorff, 2013: 82) as shown in *Figure 1*. In 2013 the interview questions were piloted which offered an opportunity to test the validity of the interview questions. The results will inform the research questions for this research. The units of analysis, that is the twelve ECTs representing three different cohorts, will be studied. Data interpretation will take place consequently and conclusions will be presented. The analysis of the findings will refer to and build on the Johnson et al.'s framework (2014: 546) of resilience.

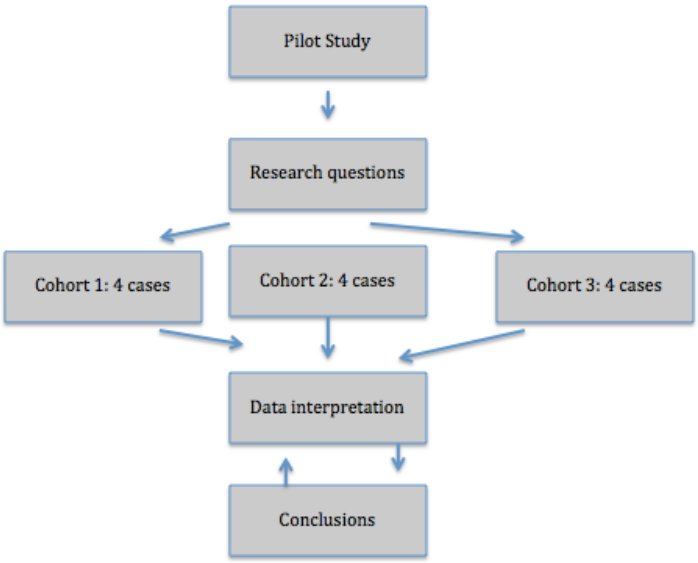


Figure 1: Research Design

In this research, careful listening to the ECTs' stories and reading their portfolios will be the main focus. The interview data will be presented separately from the portfolio data to distinguish between the spoken stories and written stories. Even though Johnson et al.'s theoretical framework will be the starting point, the researcher must be able to adjust her views to incorporate the perspectives of the ECTs and herself in her journal.

3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1 Time Line of the Research

The interviews and data analysis will be carried out in three phases (as shown in *Figure 2*) within the timespan of approximately two years. In Phase One relevant data about the ECTs will be collected in a professional biographical profile[1] for each individual case. Central to this phase of the research are the individual rather than the developmental differences of the ECTs. The objective is to explore the interplay between personal and contextual factors (objective 2). The profile will be the starting point for the second interview.

Phase One: January 2014 – March 2015:	*Conducting first set of interviews with ECTs cohorts 1,2 and 3. Establishing professional biographical profile for vignettes.*
Phase Two: April 2015 – July 2016	*Conducting second set of semi-structured interviews with ECTs cohorts 1,2 and 3. Transcription and coding of interviews and portfolios. Compare or relate data with previous data. Start* ***within-cohort*** *analysis.*
Phase Three: August – September 2016	*Start* ***cross-cohort*** *analysis and methodology research.*

Figure 2: time line of the fieldwork and data analysis

In Phase Two, the second set of interviews will be conducted. The ECTs will be asked about possible alterations since the first interview took place to be able to discuss changes in their resilience development. The participant has an individual conception of resilience, which will be critically examined. By interviewing the participants for a second time after the time lapse of 9 to 12 months, the reliability of the data will be tested because some issues or contexts generate stable and enduring perceptions while others change over time (Wisker, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). In this way ECTs will be allowed sufficient time to reflect on their previous year with more distance.

The vertical analysis or within-cohort analysis (Miles et al., 2014) will take place, with the individual ECT as the unit of analysis. After transcription and coding, a

[1] as shown in Appendix 2

summarising report will be written. The data will address what kinds of experiences, strategies and factors play a role in ECTs' resilience (research questions 1, 2 and 3). The objectives are to understand what knowledge can support ECTs' professional learning most effectively, and to understand the effective aspects of both their teacher education and induction programme (objectives 1, 3 and 4).

In Phase Three, the horizontal or cross-cohort analysis will be used to look for common patterns and processes that recur across the different cohorts of ECTs. The data analysis will address the three research questions. A second reason for cross-cohort analysis is to "deepen understanding and explanation" (ibid.: 101). Preliminary interpretations will be developed, iteratively checked with all data and changed if necessary (Punch, 2009; Silverman, 2010, 2011; Wisker, 2012).

Data collection during the ECTs' first years of teaching will consist of:

- Interviews conducted at the TEC or school to gain an understanding of the ECTs and their classroom experiences (Seidman, 2006)[2];
- line drawing based on recent teaching experiences;
- A critical incident report;[3]
- Relational maps drawn by the ECTs for each year of the research to better understand personal and contextual factors;
- A follow-up interview for extension and clarification of ECTs' definition of resilience;[4]
- ECTs' teaching portfolios.

The three cohorts will create a pseudo-longitudinal context, which will provide the opportunity to explore the similarities and differences in the ECTs' understanding of the interplay of personal and contextual factors around their teaching experiences. The perceptions of teacher resilience within the three career stages can thus be examined. When viewing resilience as a developmental process occurring over time through person-environment interactions, it can be investigated at particular stages of career development. The within-cohort differences in previous key studies support the notion

[2] as shown in Appendix 3
[3] as shown in Appendix 4
[4] as shown in Appendix 5

that resilience may develop according to the ECT's career stage (Beltman et al., 2011; Mansfield et al., 2012). Both the within-cohort and the cross-cohort analysis will further discuss the concept of resilience. This research will critically discuss whether resilience can be seen as "the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (Masten et al., op. cit.).

3.6 Data Collection Methods

In this section, there will be a critical discussion of the five data collection methods. The main advantage of using different methods will be to acquire rich data as well as triangulation of data. An earlier pilot study (2013), following a case study approach, helped to refine data collection plans and procedures, therefore improving the research design. The pilot study suggested that a recall of critical incidents, by means of line drawings, would assist this research into investigating the process of developing and sustaining ECTs' resilience. Prior to interviewing the first ECT for this research, an interviewing guide was developed and adapted, beginning with a series of questions to collect information on their first teaching experience. *Table 2* shows the relationship of the research questions and the methods employed.

Research questions	**Methods used**	**Form of data collected**
1. What kinds of experiences contribute to changes in ECTs' resilience?	Interviews Prompt on CI Line drawings Unobtrusive data	Interview transcripts Response to prompt ECTs' portfolios Researcher's memos
2. What kinds of strategies contribute to changes in ECTs' resilience?	Interviews Line drawings Relational maps	Interview transcripts ECTs' portfolios Researcher's memos
3. What personal and contextual factors contribute to changes in ECTs' resilience?	Interviews Line drawings Relational maps	Interview transcripts Diagram of relational connections ECTs' portfolios Researcher's memos

Table 2: Research Questions and Data Collection Methods Employed

3.6.1 Interviews

As mentioned above in-depth and semi-structured interviews will be used to collect data over a two-year period. It is the researcher's intention to elicit the ECTs' stories through these interviews. Participants will be asked to provide details of their classroom experiences in in-depth interviews. The interview will be semi-structured because the questions will be open-ended and there will be an emphasis on the ECT elaborating points of interest (Denscombe, 2014). A two-cycle interview process will be used with each of the twelve ECTs during 2014 and 2015 to enable the researcher to collect richer and more detailed data (Seidman, 2006). This interview process includes interview and review by the ECTs for accuracy. The interview is regarded as "a joint production, a co-production" (Wengraf, 2001: 3) between the researcher and the interviewee.

Interviews will be digitally recorded using a voice-recording app on a smartphone and transcribed prior to analysis (See *Appendix 3* for interview protocol). The ECTs will be asked to draw a story line of their first year's teaching experiences in real time, during the actual interview (Sumsion, 2004). Next, they will be invited to elaborate upon critical incidents that happened to them, and how they addressed challenges while teaching. They will also be asked to give their definition of resilience. The interview questions will be developed from Johnson et al.'s *Framework of Conditions Supporting Early Career Teacher Resilience* (2014: 546) on both personal and contextual resources and challenges. All interviews will last from 40 minutes to one hour.

3.6.2 Critical Incidents

The critical incidents approach will allow the researcher to enter ECTs' personal as well as professional lives, in order to understand their responses to change. By means of this tool, the ECTs will be asked to bring authentic teaching stories from their professional practical world. As in other studies on ECTs (Griffin, 2003; Leroux & Théorêt, 2014), the ECTs will be invited to analyse a significant event that allowed them to develop professionally, pertaining to the first research question.

Miles and Huberman (1984) define a critical incident as an event or situation that marks a significant turning point or change in the life of the subject. Farrell (2008) says that a

critical incident in teaching means any unplanned or unanticipated classroom event, which leads to questions and/or insights about an aspect of teaching or learning. Tripp (1994, 2012) defines a critical incident as "something that triggered extensive personal reflection and serious discussion" (Tripp, 2012: xi). Tripp adds a third loop to Argyris and Schön's (1974) double loop learning process, as discussed in Chapter 2. Next to learning that fits prior learning (single loop) and learning that requires changing your mental schema (double loop), Tripp puts the critical incident reflection at the beginning of the learning loop. In Tripp's (2012) "triple loop learning" (p. xiii) the critical incident is the start to the reflexive practice of the ECTs.

In this research, the ECTs will be invited to build their stories of resilience by reliving and retelling critical incidents set in a specific school context. Few studies exist that analyse critical incidents in the Dutch EFL research literature. One of the aims of this research is to make a contribution to the EFL research.

3.6.3 Line Drawing

In combination with semi-structured interviews and the critical incidents approach, a story line technique will be used to be able to elicit the ECTs' stories. The ECTs will be asked to draw a line of their careers as EFL teachers, and to mark the spots were they felt high and low in their teaching (Beijaard et al., 1999; Orland, 2000). Instead of writing a short paragraph explaining the shape of the line as Orland did, each ECT will be asked to give a verbal representation of his or her graphic.

For the purpose of this research, a story is seen to be "a series of experiences, events, choices and actions over time" (Kelchtermans, 2008: 27) that are constructed by the ECT into a meaningful whole. The stories are expected to reveal critical incidents that are set in a specific school context, contain characters (ECTs and their pupils in this case) and a particular setting (a classroom). Following Kelchtermans, the storytellers and thus the ECTs position themselves by making explicit where they belong, i.e. to a particular place in time 2014 to 2015 and a specific community, urban schools in the south of the Netherlands. When telling their stories of resilience by means of line drawings, the ECTs will be encouraged to explain the role they played in trying to deal with the critical

incident. The stories are expected to be rich in the subjective involvement of the ECTs, which will provide opportunities to gather authentic data.

Orland (2000) explored the usefulness of line drawing as a research and reflection tool and concluded: "In particular, its application [of line drawing] seems especially relevant for research agendas that focus on participants' perceptions of complex, dynamic and personally 'charged' experiences, such as the recall and interpretation of their professional development" (p.197). Not only the direction of lines, but also the decline or incline of a line provides useful information. In general, it can be argued that something important happened in teachers' functioning or development when a line changes direction (Beijaard et al., 1999). Both Moir's (1990) and Orland's (2000) research point out that ECTs' line drawings resembled one another, in the type of critical incidents the ECTs chose to talk about through their line drawings.

The line, depicted in *Figure 3*, shows that ECTs' development is not a process of continual growth. Moir (1990) found five phases that ECTs pass through, namely: (1) anticipation; (2) survival; (3) disillusionment; (4) rejuvenation and (5) reflection. Situated in the present, the line drawing and consequently the story telling asks of the ECTs that they relive and retell classroom experiences.

Figure 3: Developmental phases of a first-year teacher's attitude (vertical axe, ranging from positive at the top of the figure to negative, at the bottom) toward teaching (Moir, 1990).

3.6.4 Relational Maps

During the interviews, the ECTs will also be asked to create a relational map of personal support groups. For the first cohort this will be congruent with their first and second year of teaching, and for the other two cohorts it will vary between their third and fourth year up to their ninth and tenth. This will give the researcher insight into the evolving relationships, important for their teaching experiences and strategies that may contribute to changes in their resilience. Mapping is a visual tool, which is characterised by the use of geometric symbols connected with lines or arrows (Van den Brandhof, 2004). The relational map depicts "entities and relationships which exist in our minds" (Chen, 1976: 10). The mapping will be used as a primary tool in understanding what personal and contextual factors contribute to changes in ECTs' resilience, addressed in the third research question.

3.6.5 ECTs' Portfolios

In this research, unobtrusive data includes ECTs' portfolios. The data will be collected without introducing formal measurement procedures, as all these materials will have been produced during the ECTs' teacher education programmes. Unobtrusive data will provide insight into the ECTs' resilience and their collection does not interfere with the on-going events in the research (Trochim, 2006; Miles et al., 2014).

In a study of ECTs who had constructed teaching portfolios in the Netherlands, Mansvelder-Longayroux et al. (2007) found that ECTs frequently followed each other in a particular sequence. They started their portfolio with a description of a situation, experience or activity (recollection), or with a particular evaluation in the past. This could be a specific classroom experience or a recurrent experience at different times or classes. In this research, the ECTs analyse the described situation, "examining what exactly was going on and what had played a role" (ibid.: 58). Often the description is followed by an evaluation, combined with an analysis which will "enhance deep processing" (ibid.: 61). The ECTs are trained to reflect on the seven competences relating to the teaching profession required within the National Standards for Teachers (Stichting Beroepskwaliteit Leraren, SBL, 2005), as presented in *Appendix 13*. In their reflections, they are required to refer to the performance indicators that belong to the seven

competences and are also expected to identify areas for improvement and growth. This dataset will be used as a third source in understanding the experiences, strategies and factors impacting on ECTs' resilience addressed in the three research questions.

3.7 Data Analysis

3.7.1 Thematic Analysis

Guest et al. (2012) define thematic analysis as:

> … a rigorous, yet inductive set of procedures designed to identify and examine themes from textual data in a way that is transparent and credible … its primary concern is with presenting the stories and experiences voiced by study participants as accurately and comprehensively as possible (pp. 15-16).

A thematic analysis, also known as "classic content analysis" (Guest et al., 2012: 7) will be used to analyse the five datasets, in this research interview transcripts (including line drawings), critical incident reports, relational maps, the researcher's memos and ECTs' portfolios. Following Babbie (2013), thematic analysis is seen to be "a social research method appropriate for studying human communications through social artefacts" (p. 356). Furthermore, Krippendorff (2013) states it "is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (p. 24).

According to Braun and Clarke (2013), there are seven stages of coding and analysis, which will be followed in this research: 1) transcribing the data; 2) reading and familiarisation; 3) coding across entire dataset; 4) searching for themes; 5) reviewing themes and producing a codebook; 6) redefining and naming themes; and 7) writing and finalising analysis (pp. 202-203). Codes will both be theoretically determined before analysis, and also drawn from the data through a process of inductive reasoning. The intention is to expand Johnson et al.'s conceptual framework (2014: 546). The analytical approach is not to simplify the data, but "to open them up in order to interrogate them further" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996: 30). More specifically, after coding the data it is hoped that by presenting 'thick description', codes may be linked to theory. Stake (2010) contends that:

> "A description is rich if it provides abundant, interconnected details, and possibly cultural complexity, but it becomes *thick* description if it offers direct connection to cultural theory and scientific knowledge" (p. 49).

It is not simply presenting enough detail, but "it requires interpretation and translation into a language or means of representing an event" (Freeman, 2014: 828). In this research, the data includes interviews, portfolios, journal writing and the visual representation of line drawings and relational maps.

Additionally, thematic analysis is appropriate for answering the classic question of communications research "Who says what, to whom, why, how and with what effect?" (Babbie, 2013: 331). It requires a careful study of the "what" that is being communicated about ECTs' resilience in this case. The analysis will address "why" and " how" resilience is seen as a continuum of positive adaptation "despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (Masten et al., op. cit.).

One of the strengths of thematic analysis is that it has the advantage of being an "unobtrusive technique" (Krippendorff, 2013: 45), as the researcher may analyse behind her computer without being observed. Furthermore, according to Harvey (2014) it looks directly at communication via texts or transcripts, and hence gets at the central aspect of social interaction, which in this research are the ECTs' stories of resilience. Finally, it is intended to provide insight into complex models of human thought on resilience. Thematic analysis also has potential limitations. The researcher is limited to text form, as no classroom observations will take place. By using ATLAS.ti 7 (1.0.38) the researcher has to be careful about interpreting results of automated content analyses. ATLAS.ti is considered a tool that may support the researcher to make decisions and interpretations.

3.7.2 Triangulation

In this research "the aim is to pick triangulation sources that have different foci and different strengths, so that they can complement each other" (Miles et al., 2014: 299). The research topic of ECTs' resilience can be better understood, if it is viewed from more than one perspective. Data analysis will be conducted separately for each data set. After analysis of each dataset is completed they will be integrated (Guest et al., 2012). First, the methodology follows a case study approach consisting of twelve cases. Multiple methods will be employed: (a) digitally recorded interviews with ECTs including line drawings

and relational maps; (b) ECTs' portfolios; (c) researcher's memo; and (d) relevant theories from professional research literature. In addition, three critical friends will offer feedback on the research procedures and outcome. The researcher will read all transcripts and portfolios and will mark them electronically with open codes, which will later be condensed to themes. The researcher and three critical friends will discuss and review 5 pages of a particular coded interview to maintain high level of agreement (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Finally, member checking will take place to see whether the analysis is understandable to the ECTs.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Cohen et al. (2011) suggest that "threats to validity and reliability can never be erased completely" (p. 179). Yin (2014) calls for a "chain of evidence" (p. 128) to be provided so that an external observer may go through every step of the research from its research questions, design, data sources, data evidence and conclusions. As discussed above, the researcher will take precaution both during the interviews and after the interviews to ascertain a good standard of reliability and validity in the research. A researcher's memo will be composed, in line with the ECTs' vignettes. Field notes will be reported in memos in ATLAS.ti, linking analytic thoughts to the data segments that support them. Reflections about methods and emerging ideas will be kept in a journal. Memo writing will be considered as an informal record of thinking aloud and will provide part of the log trail for data analysis.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The implementation of this research will follow the principles of ethical research developed by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) and the Dutch Council of Higher Education (HBO raad, 2010). The ethical grid developed by Stutchbury and Fox (2009) will provide a tool to interrogate ethical issues as they arise (See *Appendix 14*). All participants will be informed in writing about the study and participation will be on a voluntary basis. The ECTs will be asked to sign a continuing informed consent form (See *Appendix 15*) and they may withdraw from the research at any time. The participants' data will be stored securely for the appropriate period of time in ATLAS.ti. The ECTs' rights to confidentiality and anonymity will be accorded, at the

same time the ECTs' right to be identified with any publication, if they wish will be recognised. The ECTs will be given opportunities to comment on the findings relevant to themselves. The researcher has been the co-ordinator of the part-time B.Ed. course for many years and a teacher to all the ECTs. The researcher no longer needs to assess any of the regular and long-term ECTs' work. Three critical friends will be asked to examine the research process and its outcome conscientiously and also make sure to keep their professional distance towards both the researcher and the participants. The researcher will try to be constantly ethically aware that any harm to the participants must be avoided.

3.10 Concluding Remarks

Great caution and self-awareness need to be exercised when conducting qualitative research

> "for the analysis and the findings may say more about the researcher than about the data. It is the researcher who sets the codes and categories for analysis, be they pre-ordinate or responsive (decided in advance of or in response to the data analysis respectively). It is the researcher's agenda that drives the research and the researcher who chooses the methodology" (Cohen et al., 2011: 554).

As mentioned earlier, qualitative research begins with research questions instead of hypotheses and as more and more data is obtained "the analytic strategy begins inductively as the researcher works to understand the meanings of the participants" (Morrow, 2007: 215). This is in contrast to the deductive, hypothesis-testing approach of quantitative research. As themes emerge around resilience, they will be tested deductively by comparing and contrasting them with Johnson et al.'s (2014) themes and new data. This is an iterative process, which is intended to lead to a great flexibility when revising the interview questions and other data gathering. The next chapter presents a critical reflection on the data collection and analysis process.

Chapter Four

4. Critical Reflection on the Research Process

In the previous chapter, the use of qualitative methods and how this will facilitate the exploration of ECTs' understandings about their resilience was critically discussed. In this chapter, the challenges encountered during the processes of data collection and analysis will be presented. It will also seek to explain and justify some of the changes the researcher made to the design and framework informing the research. Critical reflections on the researcher's dilemmas regarding the coding process will be included.

The preliminary stage of the research consisted of framing the research, placing it in context, fitting the parts together and constructing the parts "into a plausible, doable whole" (Richards, 2015: 12). Next, the researcher investigated what was already known about resilience of novice teachers, and what type of studies had been done in this area. Previous research informed the research questions and more importantly the research design. An early journal entry noted that:

> The literature helped me to focus on the phenomenon of resilience but the interviews gave the details of the particular teaching experiences. [Journal entry 5]

It was decided to take Johnson et al.'s (2014) framework as the starting point and to further elaborate on this. ATLAS.ti offered a safe container to include reflections and explorations of current research on resilience in an educational context.

When working with ATLAS.ti one of the issues was how to provide data protection as the interview transcripts, ECTs' portfolios, critical incident reports and relational maps were all digitally stored. The main function of the database is to "preserve your collected data in a retrievable form" (Yin, 2014: 124). This made it easier to send, share and copy but also easier for unauthorised persons to have access to files. The researcher is aware that the recent increased calls for rigour (Richards, 2015) will have affected her ethical practice and relationships with her participants. Conducting this research meant that there

were not only ethical dilemmas but also technical aspects such as "dealing with the sharing of private information" (Yin, 2014: 72).

4.1 Data Collection Process

In 2013 a pilot study was conducted with five participants. Two of them, the ECTs Cheryl and Miriam, also took part in this research. Consequently, their first interview protocol was somewhat different to the other ten ECTs, as the questions regarding their background had already been answered (See *Appendix 3*). When the initial interview questions focusing on personal and contextual factors were piloted, it became evident that the ECTs' line drawings and reflections also provided data about their teaching experiences and strategies. Therefore, following Masten et al.'s (1990) definition of resilience, it was decided to construct two more research questions addressing experiences and strategies impacting on ECTs' resilience, which will inform this research.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the process of data gathering and analysing started with Johnson et al.'s theoretical framework (2014: 546). This framework includes separate themes for personal and contextual factors such as *teacher identity* and *policies and practices* (as shown in *Appendix 1*). After having listened to the interviews repeatedly and having coded the transcripts and the ECTs' portfolios, it was acknowledged that the twelve ECTs hardly provided any details about these two themes. More specifically, the ECTs hardly discussed the interplay between personal and professional identities (part of Johnson et al.'s *teacher identity* theme), nor did they address the coherence between TEC courses and the dynamic demands of the profession (part of the Johnson et al.'s *policies and practices* theme). When building the ECTs' cases and subsequently their stories, the researcher realized that Johnson et al.'s framework might narrow the scope of the research.

Even though Johnson et al.'s framework influenced the thinking behind the research and consequently the planning, it was decided not to use it as an analysis tool. The first and second research questions, pertaining to experiences and strategies, opened up discussions about resilience as a process and an outcome of successful adaptation, which

was beyond the scope of Johnson et al.'s research. Thus, instead of immediately focusing on the personal and contextual factors, it was decided to first address the ECTs' experiences, then discuss their strategies and finally the factors that impact on their resilience, pertaining to the three research questions. In this way, a clear alignment between Masten's (1990) definition of resilience and the three research questions would be possible. Therefore, Johnson et al.'s framework enabled the researcher 1) to critically reflect on how to proceed with the research; and 2) to create the following theoretical framework to assist with the data analysis:

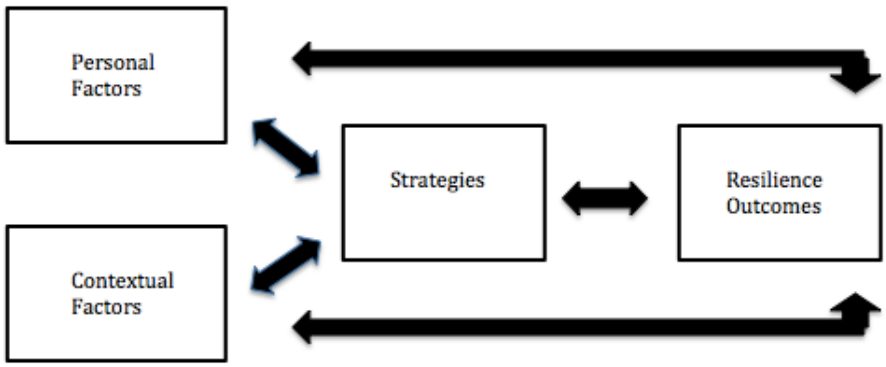


Figure 2: theoretical framework (Mansfield, 2015 adapted from Biggs & Moore, 1993)

The framework, as shown in *Figure 2*, portrays a movement from personal and contextual resources to strategies used in the classroom that have a particular resilience outcome. Thus, Masten's et al.'s definition of resilience, i.e. "the process of, capacity for or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (1990: 425), could be critically discussed. Instead of only taking the original framework composed by Johnson et al. (2014: 546) as an underpinning of the research, it was decided to start off with a thematic analysis of the ECTs' teaching experiences, followed by a discussion of the strategies employed by the ECTs and subsequently the factors that impact on their resilience. Hence, the resilience framework comprised four aspects:

1) Personal factors that impact on resilience;
2) Contextual factors which focus on the context in which the teaching takes place;
3) Strategies employed to deal with critical incidents;
4) Expected outcome that are the results of effective resilience strategies.

Bi-directional arrows in *Figure 2* illustrate that the resilience process is not linear but that the personal and contextual factors interact with each other before resulting in adaptive contextual outcomes.

4.1.1 Interviews with ECTs

The procedures of Phase One (as shown in *Figure 2* in Chapter 3) were: 1) explain the details of the research in a face-to-face meeting; 2) send the E-mail of consent to all twelve ECTs; 3) invite the ECT to an interview; 4) record the interviews; 5) transcribe the interviews; and 6) analyse the interview procedures and responses. The invitation to take part in the research and the sending of the E-mail of information and consent to scheduling the interview went smoothly.

When selecting the ECTs the researcher approached trainee teachers in person whom she sensed she had a rapport with. She was aware of how the two-way asymmetric power relationship between her and the ECTs influenced the selection and tried to manage her fear of rejection. She furthermore approached people whom she thought would be open to her research topic of resilience and felt that their contributions would be mutually beneficial. To overcome the possibility of the ECTs being intimidated by the research, the researcher clarified exactly what she would do and she explained her reasons why (Roulston, 2014).

None of the ECTs asked for further clarification. Each ECT was scheduled for an interview at his or her convenience and all first interviews took place at the TEC. The researcher followed Kvale and Brinkmann's "types of interview questions" (2009: 135-36), which broadly include the phases of an interview as a whole, with a focus on probing questions such as "Can you say something more about that?", "Do you have further examples of this?" to get to a rich description of critical incidents. Silence was also employed to further the interview process. By allowing pauses during the interview, the ECTs had ample time to reflect and then break the silence themselves with examples taken from their practice. The researcher practised lengthening the time that she left before breaking into a pause. The interview focused both on retrospective reflections of previous classroom experiences and on the present situation in the school context.

After consultation with the ECTs, the interviews were conducted in English. All ECTs were used to speaking in English with the researcher in a professional context. Furthermore, for six of the ECTs it was customary to discuss their teaching experiences in English with their mentors as they taught at bilingual units. The other ECTs were happy to discuss their classroom experiences in their additional language (L2) as two of them were English native speakers, two were Caribbean, one was Italian and the others spoke English to family members on a regular basis. Some code switching between L2 and L1 took place during the interviews. When the ECTs referred to people and places pseudonyms were used in the transcripts, in order to anonymise details that might allow the ECTs to be identified.

Each interview lasted approximately one hour. Some ECTs talked more than others and this influenced the length of the interview. All interviews took place face-to-face so the interviewer was aware of her facial expressions, tone of voice and gestures. As the interviews progressed, the researcher became aware of how her ability to listen actively to what the ECTs had to say had an impact on the interview.

> I realize that I am more relaxed conducting the interview with Miriam, the fifth interview in fact and that I include more mm and ah-ah interceptions to convey that I am actively listening. This must have an impact on the data. [Journal entry 25]

Initially, the researcher felt guarded and meticulously stuck to the interview protocol, after the fifth interview the researcher did not interrupt as much but instead gave non-verbal support and remained quietly focused. This allowed for longer participants' turns, which meant that ECTs were given more time to retrieve memories and were able to provide in-depth discussions of their critical incidents.

After having undertaken all the interviews of Phase One, transcription was started before the follow-up interview in order to familiarize the researcher with the data and to prepare questions for the next interview. The second interview was scheduled within nine months of the first interview, and all interviews took place between January 2014 and July 2015. The follow-up interviews with Ralph and Merlin, two long-term students, did not take place as they did not answer their E-mail.

Although an interview protocol (as shown in *Appendix 3, 4 and 5*) was referred to, the researcher was not restricted by it and took time to listen closely to the ECTs' stories (Richards, 2015). Additionally, the researcher situated her investigation within the TEC, and inquired about this context with the ECTs. Furthermore, attention to what was being said but also to how the ECTs said it was central to the interpretation of the ECTs' stories (Wengraf, 2001; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In their interviews and portfolios, some ECTs took a more objective approach and hardly discussed their feelings when talking about the critical incidents, whereas others were more expressive and emotional. Different personalities respond in a variety of ways, which forms part of their coping strategies as beginning teachers. In order to present the data, so that it reflected the cases and their stories, the vignettes show the range of personalities and provide more details about the twelve ECTs (see *Appendix 8*).

The interview process and methods used such as critical incident reports, line drawings, and relational maps provided data from ECTs regarding their own ideas on and experience of resilience. In an attempt to exclude the researcher's personal experiences as an EFL teacher and teacher educator, "a researcher's identity memo" (Ravitch & Carl, 2016: 70) was written to explicate the biases that the researcher might have brought to the research (as shown in *Appendix 11*). Over the course of the research the memo was added to and revised to be able to connect aspects of the researcher's identity to the research topic of resilience.

Semi-structured interviews required some flexibility of the researcher, as she had to listen carefully to what the ECTs had to say and how they said it. In the most productive interviews the researcher spoke little. The researcher had to occasionally remind herself that the goal was to listen. She had to remain present and eye contact was essential to remain attentive. Some notes were taken during the interviews but sometimes this distracted the ECTs. As everything was digitally recorded it was decided after each interview to write down key words and phrases. Field notes were made, in which personal reactions about the ECTs were jotted down together with important features of their responses. The ethical grid developed by Stutchbury and Fox (2009) was used at various stages through the research. The top relational layer assisted the researcher in addressing issues such as her relationship with the ECTs, further discussed below and in her memo in *Appendix 11*.

The ECTs teaching experiences and their strategies were recalled by focusing on specific critical incidents and line drawings. The retrospective approach might have affected the data, because some of the critical incidents took place in the past and therefore the ECTs might have changed the facts somewhat, including a generalisation of experiences (Wengraf, 2001; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The ECTs' experiences and their overall life situations were often difficult to sum up in two consecutive interviews. Reporting on critical incidents and line drawing, however, proved to be functional tools as they resulted in rich data, as will be explained in the next sections.

To be able to ensure heterogeneity of the sample group, three distinct cohorts were invited to participate in this research, as explained in Chapter 3.3. The number of years the ECTs had taught EFL was the criterion for creating three different cohorts. In fact, the years of EFL teaching were often the same as the years of enrolment as a part-time student. All four long-term students had started as full-time students of EFL and switched to the part-time course when they found a paid teaching job. The clear division between the three cohorts allowed for a pseudo-longitudinal approach. The four long-term students had started in between 2006 and 2008, the four regular students had enrolled in either 2010 or 2011 and the four beginning students in between 2012 and 2014. However, the cohort division seemed to be a red herring, as it was soon established that instead of having four cases per cohort, there were twelve individual cases. Many ECTs had previously obtained qualifications and gained work experience. To illustrate this, the beginning ECT Dorothy had been teaching Italian for six years when she started at the TEC, which gave her a head start on the other three beginning ECTs. Dorothy had practised her general pedagogical skills for six years and now needed to get stronger in her pedagogical content knowledge and EFL knowledge. The regular student Miriam had five years of teaching primary school children before she enrolled, which also put her in a different position to the other three regular students. In the first cohort, the long-term student Cheryl obtained her B.Ed. in 2015 but Merlin, Ralph and Adrian are still enrolled at the TEC. It is not known whether they will graduate in the near future. *Table 1* in Chapter 3 shows how the twelve ECTs are organised into three different cohorts, according to years of EFL teaching. This may reflect their content knowledge and their

pedagogical content knowledge, but not their general pedagogical skills for those ECTs with previous teaching experiences like Dorothy, Miriam and Trudy.

Therefore, it was decided to abandon both the within-cohort and cross-cohort analysis and analyse the twelve cases separately in a cross-case analysis, within their school context. In the presentation of the data, the three cohorts with their distinct year of enrolment were maintained for the structuring and interpretation of the data. The case building process started with composing the vignettes. The cohort division was preserved as an organisational device to be able to build the cases of the twelve ECTs in a structured manner.

4.1.2 Line Drawings

As mentioned above, during the first interviews it was noted that the methods such as line drawing and mind mapping were tools to obtain rich information from the participants, and so were appropriate tools to use for the semi-structured interviews. The line drawings and maps proved very helpful, because they forced the ECTs to turn inward, and think about their teaching ideas and themselves as teachers. The line drawing especially gave rise to different narratives, as can be seen in this journal entry:

> The previous two ECTs, Dorothy and Trudy, were very precise about their various stages of teaching and took a while drawing a somewhat bumpy career line and elaborating upon it, whereas Ralph quickly drew a line indicating an upward rise. His feelings about his teaching had improved and he became very involved in explaining why that had been the case. Adrian said his line "was like a heart rhythm on a hospital monitor." [Journal entry 16]

It was noted that reliance solely upon unrelenting questioning was counterproductive, and the line drawing frequently allowed further self-expression of the ECT. The researcher mainly asked for clarification and explanation in order to get to the ECTs' stories. With more practice, the researcher became aware not to be too focused on the interview protocol and have her full attention on the ECT.

4.1.3 Relational Maps

The relational maps gave ECTs a chance to elaborate upon their support network. It appeared to be useful to reflect on their network because these people were valuable

resources in the ECTs' lives. The researcher did not give any further instruction about how to draw the map to allow for personal interpretations. Rachel was the only participant who drew a map with the arrows going both ways, explaining that the communication between her and her friends was reciprocal and not one way, see *Figure 3* below. They "engaged in collaborative job-embedded reflection", which stimulated Rachel to "improve her practice" (Rachel, portfolio).

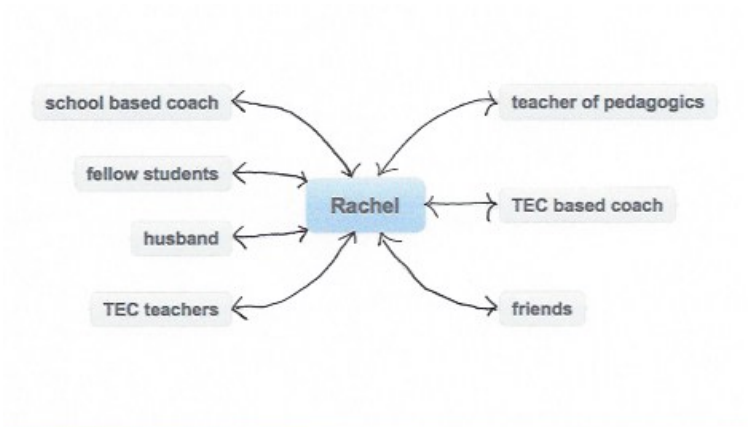


Figure 3: Rachel's relational map, interview 2

In Chapter 3.5.1, it was stated that there are five data sets. However, after Phase One, it was decided that relational maps, critical incidents together with the line drawings would all be included in the interview data, as ECTs were asked to explain their drawings during both interviews. The ECTs' reflections on their drawings, therefore, belonged to the interview data set, and were included in the ECTs' vignettes (see *Appendix 8*). This meant that there was a reduction to three data sets illustrated by *Figure 4*.

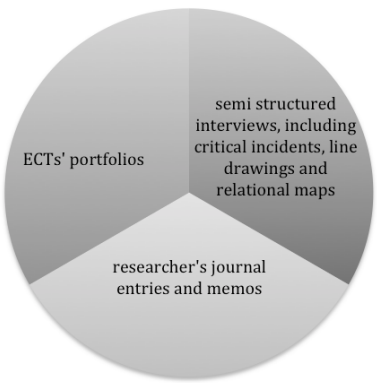


Figure 4: final datasets

4.1.4 ECTs' Portfolios

In cohort 3, three of the beginning ECTs handed in their portfolio, and Trudy was exempted for her traineeship in year one because of her previous teaching experience as a primary teacher. In cohort 2, all four regular ECTs handed in their portfolios. In cohort 1, all four long-term students had passed their traineeships three to five years ago, which meant that they could no longer trace their paper portfolios. They all had frequently moved house and had also lost the digital version. So in total there were 7 portfolios in the portfolio data set composed by Vera, Miriam, Florence, Linda, Alice, Dorothy and Rachel. The full presentation of the dataset of this research is shown in *Appendix 7*. As explained in Chapter 3, in the portfolios the ECTs were encouraged to question and analyse their teaching. These portfolios provided rich material on their critical thinking skills, and they shed a further light on their understanding of the concept of resilience. The relevant parts of the portfolios were translated into English. At times this presented dilemmas, as it was difficult to find translations for specific Dutch concepts such as "the trainee can support his/her pedagogical beliefs and plan of action in relation to the different education tracks" (Stichting Beroepskwaliteit Leraren, SBL, 2005:7). For some of the ECTs, composing a portfolio in their native language allowed them to write more comfortably and "construct more detailed and nuanced accounts" (Miller, 2011: 53).

The portfolios were very useful in providing insight into how the ECTs evaluated some of their teaching aspects and critical incidents. Additionally, the portfolio data was different to the interviews as the ECTs wrote in sentences and spoke in thoughts. In the portfolios, the ECTs had to follow a particular format, reflecting on the seven competences and the various performance indicators (Stichting Beroepskwaliteit Leraren, SBL, 2005), as presented in *Appendix 13*. They were also written with a certain reader in mind, their TEC tutor and their school-based mentor. The process of writing the stories for their portfolio may have helped to organize their thoughts as they re-examined, changed and adjusted their reports. However, the interviews were oral stories, so spontaneous narratives based on critical incidents. The semi-structured interviews allowed for freer associations, in which the ECTs examined their lived experience (Van Manen, 1990). Thus, for the beginning and regular ECTs the portfolios supplemented the

interview data and were a useful tool. Hence, a constant review of recorded and written material helped the researcher's reflexivity and theory development.

4.1.5 Researcher's Journal

In order to provide some distance for the researcher from the interview situation and address reflexivity (Cohen et al., 2011), a reflexive journal was kept to record issues, ideas and difficulties that arose during the fieldwork. Memo writing started in Phase One of the data collection in ATLAS.ti. For the purpose of this research, a reflexive journal is taken to mean "a developing, tentative running record of on-going analysis and interpretation" (ibid.: 468), examples of which will be provided throughout this section and Chapters 5, 6 and 7. The following journal entry gives an insight into the researcher's thinking process when conducting interviews:

> The more semi-structured interviews were conducted the more awareness was raised that a lot of preparation took place before the session, more discipline and more creativity in the sessions, and certainly a lot of time for analysis and interpretation after the session [Journal entry 24].

The research was conducted from an interpretative paradigm, which "accepts that researchers have a participatory stance" (Scherff, 2008: 1322). The on-going journal of the researcher's own involvement, actions and reflections was put into memos in ATLAS.ti or written into a journal. At a later stage in the research, a journal entry states, for example:

> Although ATLAS.ti has been extremely helpful in coding my data, being away from the computer screen allows for a different mode of interaction with the data and creates a different physical space [Journal entry 35].

The researcher's general strategy was to first build Network Views in ATLAS.ti by 1) dragging and dropping a code such as *help seeking* from the Code Manager; 2) adding ECTs' reflections taken from the interviews and portfolios; and 3) the researcher's memos, as illustrated by *Figure 5*. With the help of Network Views relationships between codes, ECTs' reflections and memos were expressed for higher-order conceptual level analysis.

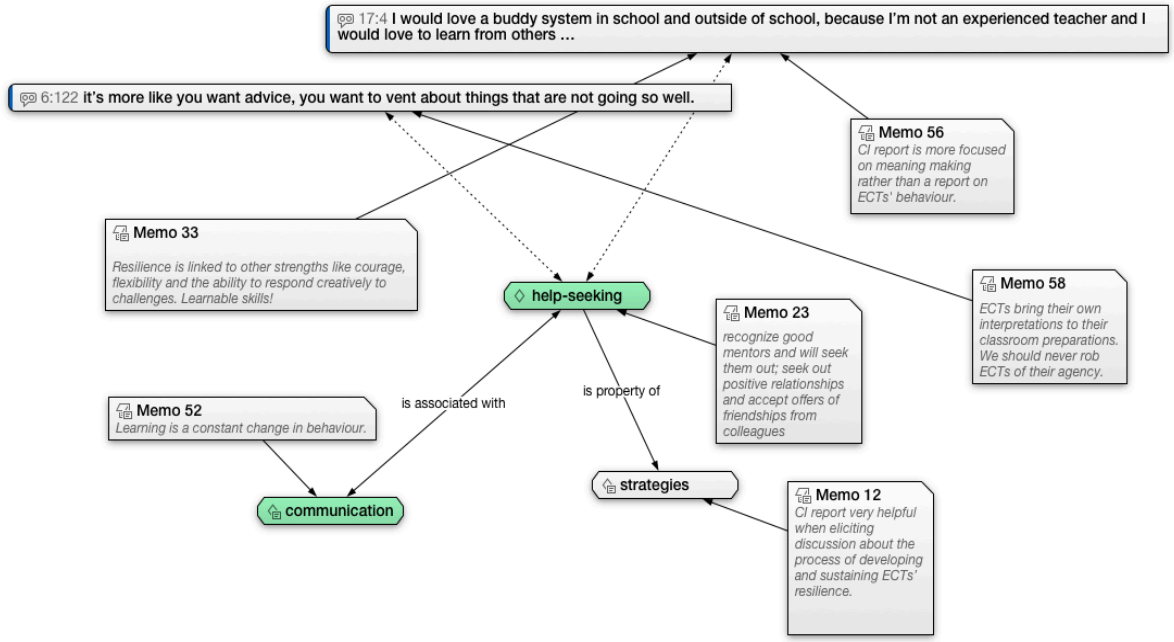


Figure 5: Example of Network View in ATLAS.ti on strategies

In *Figure 5*, the researcher coded a portfolio entry and an interview reflection as examples of *help seeking* and next identified that ECTs attempt to improve their practice by actively looking for mentors or buddies (See memo 23, in *Figure 5*). Subsequently, the researcher's journal entry states:

> Learning alone from trial and error is not the same as learning from buddies who may be able to demonstrate how to respond to both predictable and unexpected problems that arise in classrooms, which may impact on their resilience [Journal entry 38].

The second Network View taken from the researcher's memo writing, illustrated by *Figure 6* below, shows Adrian's case structure view, addressing the three research questions and their specific codes. The categories *experiences*, *strategies*, *personal factors* and *contextual factors* are in grey. The codes belonging to these categories have the same colours as in the codebook (see *Table 2* below). The case structure views were created for all twelve cases and they showed different patterns, which helped to explore the data visually. Graphic illustrations enabled a different kind of exploration, because they illustrate findings in the form of concept maps. According to Friese (2014) concept maps are "known to aid creativity and to help in detailing … a line of argument" (p. 219). Other data such as the portfolios, the line drawings and the relational maps were also incorporated into ATLAS.ti, and subsequently linked to the twelve cases.

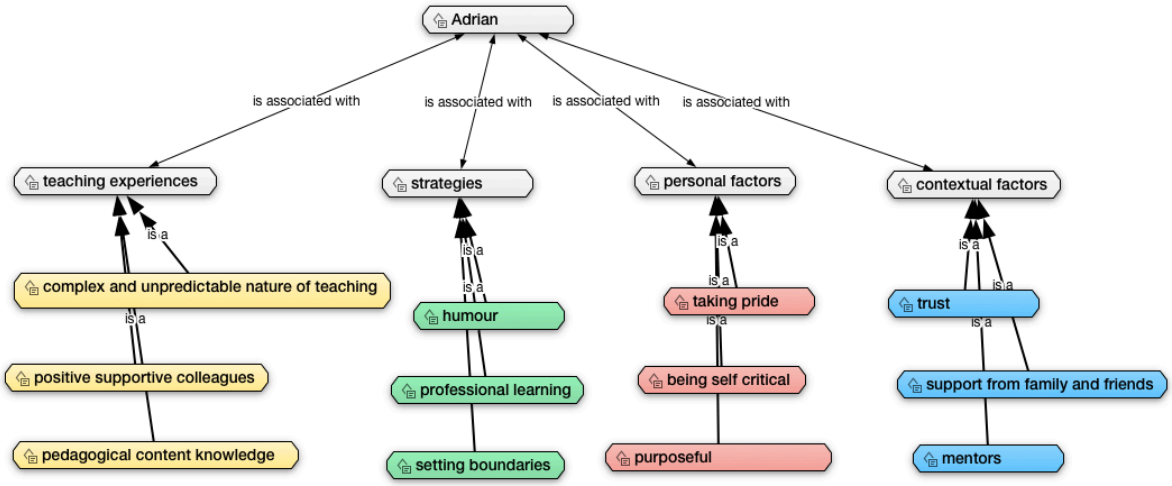


Figure 6: Example of case structure view for Adrian in ATLAS.ti

4.1.6 Member Check

Finally, the researcher checked with the ECTs as to their intended meanings, with the help of member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Krippendorff, 2013). Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider member check or participation validation the most important validity measure, saying that

> "if the investigator is to be able to purport that his or her reconstructions are recognisable to audience members as adequate representations of their own (and multiple) realities, it is essential that they be given the opportunity to react to them" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 314).

A member check was carried out throughout the process of data collection and analysis. During the interviews on-the-spot-validity checks were provided, by repeating back to each ECT what she or he said during the course of the interview, and making sure that the researcher had understood them correctly. Additionally, all transcripts were returned to the ECTs for them to read and check.

In September 2016, the ECTs were given a summary of the findings and were asked to comment. It was the researcher's priority to articulate and represent the authentic views of the ECTs. As one of the aims of the research was to listen to the ECTs' stories, it had to be ensured that there was a good fit between the researcher's interpretation and

representation of the ECTs and the ECTs' own understandings of their teaching experiences. Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to member checking as a type of "credibility check".

4.1.7 Reflecting on Ethical Issues

Before consent was sought, the research topic of resilience was explained to the ECTs. At the start of both interviews the ECTs were informed of how the interview data and portfolios would be used and to whom the findings would be reported. The researcher made sure to point out at every interview session that the ECTs would have a right to withdraw from the research for any or no reason, at any time. She tried to support the continued involvement of the ECTs and to answer any misconception developed during the process. The ECTs decided on where and when to meet up to make sure to obtain the most beneficial outcome.

Positioning the research within an interpretative paradigm meant that the ECTs were given the opportunity to recall, explore and interpret their personal teaching experiences. The challenge for the researcher was to provide anonymity within their school settings by using pseudonyms and withholding of location. The researcher was at first concerned that the ECTs' fear of exposure would limit their sharing of stories. However, the ECTs appeared to be more critically engaged when analysing their teaching experiences in their interviews compared to their portfolios. In their written accounts the ECTs were often descriptive without being sufficiently critical and they frequently copied phrases taken from the table of competences presented by the TEC (SBL, 2005).

The researcher tried not to include prior knowledge of the ECTs. Often she knew more about the ECTs than they disclosed in their portfolios and interviews. The ECTs also wove the personal and professional into their first person accounts of their developments as a beginning teacher. Following the ethical grid by Stutchbury and Fox (2009) throughout the process of data collection and analysis, the researcher tried not to use sensitive information she had, knowing the ECTs as students in the TEC courses. In her coding she tried to remain true to their stories and attempted to mitigate her bias. What the ECTs revealed to the researcher was also influenced by the fact that she was still a

tutor to the four beginning ECTs. Therefore, there was an implicit relationship of power between her and the third cohort. In her journal, the researcher included her personal observations after every interview. She tried her best not to be judgemental and treat everybody with dignity and respect:

> I am surprised to find out that even though I was prepared for the interview, I had to be conscious about not being judgemental when Miriam analysed her recent critical incidents. I need to learn how to bite my tongue. [Journal entry 37]

There appeared to be fewer interruptions by the researcher in the second round of interviews because she was more aware of "how interview data is co-constructed" (Roulston, 2003: 655). Finally, during all phases of the research no complicated language was used and the significance of the research was explained in a straightforward fashion.

4.2 Data Analysis Process

The interviews were transcribed including indicators such as hesitation, laughter and emphasis. The transcription was typed using "F4" free software. This was imported into ATLAS.ti software package for qualitative coding. Even though the transcripts were as verbatim as possible, all of the nuances such as nonverbal behaviour and "ums" and "ers" were not included. Playing the clips of the transcriptions in very short bursts, various issues were raised such as trying to get a "definitive" transcript meant deciding when to use punctuation and what punctuation symbols to use, what to do with pauses or emphasis on particular words. The transcription notation system can be found in *Appendix 12*. This is how the researcher discovered that producing a transcription was not simple and very time consuming. Braun and Clarke (2013) contend that a "transcript of audio (visual) data is not a facsimile; it's a representation" (p. 162). The transcript was the product of an interaction between the recording and the researcher.

Fifteen of the interviews were professionally transcribed. Whenever the ECTs spoke Dutch this was included together with the translation. Any references to gestures, eye contact, tone of voice and pauses were left out. Instead of putting in the non-verbal communication in the interview transcripts, the researcher wrote memos after each interview to recall the tone and the impressions present during the conversation. Furthermore, the researcher listened to the recordings multiple times while reading over

the transcripts and added notes in her reflexive journal and memos in ATLAS.ti. One of the questions that arose was how the researcher was influencing the data by unconsciously prodding the ECTs or interrupting their storyline, and how she could address this. One such journal entry is given below:

> I am very aware to be distanced from the data. I need to be conscious not to include my personal issues when I analyse the data. [Journal entry 67]

The researcher critically reflected on the subjective nature of the research approach. She became aware that it is embedded in all phases of the interpretive processes of qualitative research. It is important to note that data analysis took place during all aspects of the research, and was therefore not a summative activity as was originally proposed in *Figure 2* in Chapter 3. One of the goals of the data analysis was to remain faithful to the ECTs as experts about their own teaching experiences. Another memo reads:

> The interviews later in the day and later in the academic year appear to be more difficult for both the interviewee and the interviewer. At the end of the academic year, the ECTs experience more pressure … Vera seemed quite distressed in her second interview, because of her father, so I seemed to focus more on her and not on the interview protocol. [Journal entry 77]

Vera's second interview was difficult for her as it took place at the end of the school year, which is a stressful period and her father had just been hospitalised. In her portfolio Vera wrote: "I felt my spark had gone at the end of the school year." It is important to acknowledge that both the ECTs and the researcher were interpreting their surroundings all the time. The researcher tried to carefully consider how this might have affected the interview data. One of the issues the researcher was conscious of was how to present the ECTs in their vignettes. She was aware of their vulnerability and was sensitive about what details to include and what to exclude. It was the researcher's priority to articulate and represent the authentic views of the ECTs. She remained sensitive to monitor her own values, assumptions and biases in her journal. Bracketing the researcher's personal opinions and her biases was considered to be difficult, which is further discussed in the researcher's memo as presented in *Appendix 11*. An attempt was made "to become more conscious of and track how subjectivities are at play" (Ravitch & Carl, 2016: 219).

Data analysis started with reading all three datasets repeatedly to achieve immersion and obtain a sense of the whole (Krippendorf, 2013; Miles et al., 2014). As discussed

previously, it was decided to move away from Johnson et al.'s (2014) framework and develop a more supportive framework based on Mansfield et al. (2015). Initial coding was not started immediately, as originally intended, because the researcher did not want to create bias in the identification of any relevant text segments. A memo written during this time:

> All 22 interviews plus the portfolios are in ATLAS.ti, this is when I can start coding the data. …I write a lot of memos these weeks to address how the codes relate to each other categorically. I also need to begin reducing codes to themes. Questions I ask include: What does this code mean? How does this code relate with and map onto my data and my RQs? [Memo 33]

When all 22 interviews were transcribed and the portfolios translated, data analysis continued. This was an iterative process consisting of reading, coding, reviewing and coding and recoding (Cohen et al., 2011; Richards, 2015).

As this research is located within the constructivist paradigm, interviews were seen as a process in which meaning is constructed between the interviewer, the interviewee, the school context and the medium of communication. As stated previously, the researcher was the primary instrument in the research (Miles, 2014: 9) so she actively constructed and developed themes. The researcher attempted to give voice to the ECTs when providing narrative evidence, which the researcher selected, edited and used to address the three research questions. This mosaic of voices helped to build the cases around the twelve ECTs. When coding the data addressing the first research question, it became apparent that the ECTs separated EFL issues from their general pedagogical skills both in their interviews and portfolios. Because of her university based training, the researcher had a content base bias and implicit pedagogical knowledge. Early on in the data analysis process she noticed that ECTs such as Ralph focused more on his pupils than on his English skills. She had to accept that the ECTs gave more importance to their explicit pedagogical knowledge than their skills in English.

After having established the first "decision scheme" (Krippendorff, 2013: 135), which organised data further into categories, the coding process was carried out for all three datasets. This preliminary coding scheme (as shown in detail in *Appendix 10*) was given to three critical friends to discuss whether decisions made in the analysis of the content could be justified. They were invited to read 5 pages of the same transcript and discuss

the coding with the researcher. The set of codes and literature references were also critically discussed. This was not just to establish a degree of concordance between the researcher and the critical friends but also to facilitate a discussion (Richards, 2015). The three critical friends provided a sounding board for the researcher's developing ideas. The purpose of doing so was twofold: first, to articulate some preliminary themes which the researcher used as points of departure from which to ask questions during the interviews; second, to begin the process of reflexivity, which was useful for the research process (Tufford & Newman, 2010). The following journal entries give an insight into the researcher's thinking process:

> I understand coding as a reflexive process that inevitably bears the mark of the researcher. Even with multi-independent coders there is no "accurate way" to code data. [Journal entry 68]
>
> I realize the importance of the codebook. Codes must be explicit, unambiguous and mutually exclusive, a somewhat daunting task. [Journal entry 88]

As discussed in Chapter 3, the seven stages of coding and analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2013) were followed. The interview transcripts were first coded; second the ECTs' portfolios; and then the researcher's journal. At the beginning of the first analysis phase of the interview transcripts, all text segments in which the ECTs addressed the kind of *experiences* that contributed to changes in their resilience were coded into the same category.

Next all the text fragments referring to *strategies* undertaken by the ECTs were grouped together and formed the basis for further analysis. Finally, the text fragments referring to *factors* impacting on the ECTs' resilience were also grouped together. The preliminary coding scheme, followed by the final coding scheme, are presented in *Appendix 10.* A visualisation of the first phase and second phase is provided below in *Figure 7.* This procedure was repeated for the other two datasets.

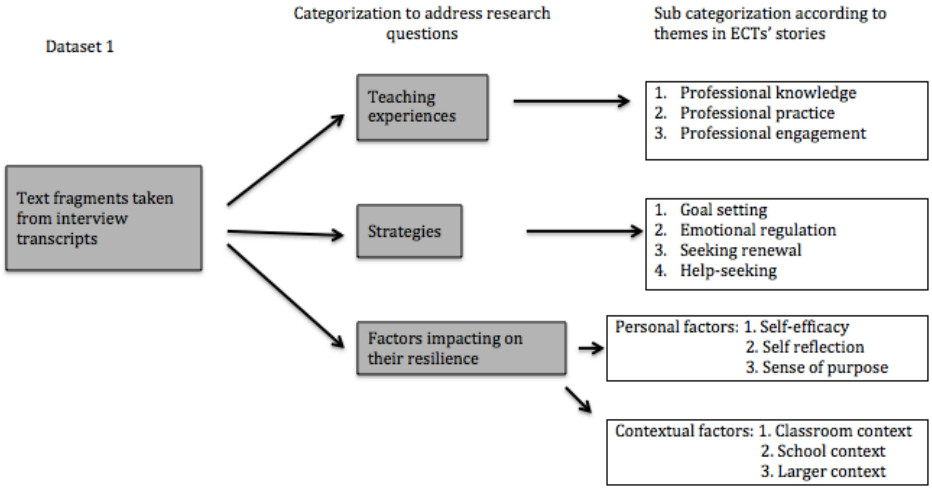


Figure 7: a visualisation of the first (in grey) and second analysis phase (in white)

After initial coding there appeared to be too many codes, which made it complicated to establish relationships. Codes were adjusted several times, until a stable codebook with a discriminative combination of codes and themes was established. Setting up a codebook and including a description of how the codes were related to each other helped to become more precise and critical. Code definitions were composed describing the meaning of a code, and how it should be applied. It contained a code definition, an example of a typical data segment and an example of a data segment when the code did not apply. Writing code definitions helped to improve the methodological rigour of this research, as the researcher had to think about the meaning of a code in comparison to other codes. In ATLAS.ti, code memos were added which consisted of thoughts and questions that occurred during the process of coding. In *Table 1* an example is given of an extract taken out of the second dataset, i.e. the portfolios, which was then coded. In the third row an example is given of an extract that does not meet the requirement of the code.

Research question 1: teaching experiences impacting on resilience		portfolio excerpt
code	freedom to try new teaching ideas	
definition	CI that specifies the ECTs learning from making their own materials and designing their lessons.	Florence: I really get a lot of energy from designing my own teaching materials.Whenever I have the time I try to do that.
code not applicable	CI that focuses on pupil behaviour	Alice: I try to get their attention by greeting students at the door entrance.

Table 1: example of a code for the first research question about teaching experiences impacting on resilience

In this research, some codes are data-derived (i.e. in vivo) such as *feeling isolated*, *supportive colleagues* and *managing pupil behaviour*. Other codes such as *emotional regulation* and *being self-critical* are researcher-derived codes, because they are not the ECTs' words but the researcher's.

In the second analysis phase, after a process of defining, redefining and reducing the number of codes, initial themes were established. Richards (2015) maintains that judgement is essential to determine what a theme is. In this research, a theme "captures something important in relation to the overall research question" (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 82). Themes were built based on the codes addressing experiences, strategies and factors, referring to the three research questions.

In the end, it was decided to address the three research questions by means of the following set of codes and themes for *teaching experiences*, *strategies* and *factors* impacting on ECTs' resilience (*Table 2*).

1. Teaching experiences	
Codes	Themes
Strong content knowledge Pedagogical content knowledge	Professional knowledge
Complex and unpredictable nature of teaching Freedom to try new teaching ideas Managing pupil behaviour	Professional practice
Feeling isolated Positive supportive colleagues or administration	Professional engagement
2. Strategies	
Codes	Themes
Persistence Reflection Setting boundaries Time management Work life balance	Goal setting
Emotional regulation Humour Mindfulness	Emotional regulation
Seeking renewal Professional Learning	Seeking renewal
Help-seeking Communication	Help-seeking
3. Personal and contextual factors	
3a. Personal (protective) factors	
Codes	Themes
Taking pride Self-concept Becoming a better person Ability to persist Ability to succeed with a task	Self-efficacy
Negotiate the contradictions, dilemmas and tensions of teaching Employ proactive ways of coping Being self critical	Self reflection
Belief you can control your actions Purposeful Goal directed Direct control over their own behaviour	Sense of purpose/ agency
3b. Contextual (protective) factors	
Codes	Themes
Recognition Trust Teacher-pupil relationship	Classroom context (micro-level)
Collaboration Collegiality Induction programmes Mentors Supportive democratic leadership	School context (meso-level)
Professional learning communities/ TEC Support from family and friends	Larger context (macro-level)

Table 2: final Codebook for the three research questions

4.2.1 Teaching Experiences

The subcategories of the three themes addressing the first research question are presented in *Figure 8*. During the process, codes were abandoned, others were added and some codes were almost identical and could be merged. The codes and themes were related to the seven competences that are part of the TEC curriculum (see *Appendix 13*). In their interviews and portfolios, the majority of the ECTs referred to the seven competences (Stichting Beroepskwaliteit Leraren, SBL, 2005) of the national teachers' curriculum, when discussing their critical incidents and teaching experiences. The definitions of the three themes and their interpretations will be further discussed in Chapter 5 and 6 and *Appendix 10*.

Figure 8: coding trees: overview of themes addressing the first research question about teaching experiences that contribute to changes in ECTs' resilience

4.2.2 Strategies

Figure 9 gives the overview of the four themes addressing the second research question on the strategies that impact on ECTs' resilience. The definitions of the themes are in *Appendix 10.*

Figure 9: coding tree, overview of themes addressing the second research question about strategies

The coding procedure is presented in *Table 3*. The four themes are illustrated by quotations taken from the ECTs' interviews. This table shows the preparatory phase of coding the strategies and designing the vignettes, as an introduction to the twelve ECTs. The full vignettes are discussed in *Appendix 8*. Before addressing the second research question in Chapter 5, these vignettes present the kinds of strategies that impact on the ECTs' resilience.

Research question 2: strategies impacting on resilience				
Name		**Strategies**	**Strategies**	**Vignettes**
long term Merlin		emotional regulation		*"It differs a lot per class how much of myself I show to them."*
Adrian		emotional regulation		*"You avoid the escalation and get on with your work …"*
Ralph		goal setting		*"It's the kids that matter to me. I like the kids, English is just a vehicle …"*
Cheryl		goal setting		*"You have 28 kids looking at you as the leader not as a sidekick"*
regular Vera		help seeking	emotional regulation	*"My colleague said you should never become real angry, you should act angry …"*
Miriam		emotional regulation		*"I don't only blame it on the pupil, I also have a short fuse at times."*
Florence		help seeking	emotional regulation	*" My mum says: You cannot be taught everything, you also need to experience things."*
Linda		goal setting	seeking renewal	*"My first thought was: "How on earth am I going to keep these children quiet?"*
Beginning Alice		emotional regulation		*"The first job was basically surviving for me …"*
Dorothy		goal setting		*"I like to be in a positive environment …"*
Rachel		goal setting		*"I believe in natural parenting. I'm afraid to become everything I don't want to be."*
Trudy		seeking renewal		*"Never work harder than your students …"*

Table 3: 4 themes addressing the second research question about the kinds of strategies contributing to changes in ECTs' resilience, and designing the vignettes of twelve ECTs

4.2.3 Personal and Contextual Factors

For the third research question about the personal and contextual factors that impact on resilience, the researcher first organised the data relating to personal factors in broad brush categories such as courage – empathy – high expectations – hope – initiative – motivation – self-efficacy – self-reflection and mindfulness – sense of humour – sense of purpose – sense of vocation, and social and emotional regulation. The definitions of the categories are in *Appendix 10*. The second iteration of coding reduced the code list by eliminating superfluous codes such as: empathy, high expectations, sense of humour, sense of vocation and social and emotional regulation. Other codes such as: courage – hope – initiative, and motivation were grouped under self-efficacy. Whenever the ECTs discussed beliefs that determined how they felt, thought and motivated themselves these reflections were assigned the theme self-efficacy. In the third iteration, the code list was

further tightened to the three themes of self-efficacy, self-reflection and sense of purpose/ agency. Both positive (labelled resources) and negative reflections (labelled challenges) were assigned to all codes, therefore reverse coding was employed. An example is given in *Table 4*, in which a data excerpt is given an initial code, which is later on changed into a final code.

Data excerpt	Initial coding	Final coding
Adrian: "I have ADHD, I'm very opinionated, and big, loud, and sometimes not as modest as I should be ..." [Interview]	I-statement	Being self-critical
Miriam: "After experiencing uncertainty, I step back and analyse my actions ..." [Portfolio]	Stepping back and analysing action	Negotiating tensions of teaching
Alice: "I ask students to do an evaluation of the class and use their comments and suggestions in my planning for the next session ..." [Portfolio]	Reflexive writing	Employ pro-active ways of coping
Trudy: "I'd take the year off, I focus only on doing my studies [refers to a previous Master]. And now I'm doing it all together ..." [Interview]	Work-life balance reflection	Negotiating dilemmas

Table 4: development of the theme self-reflection, addressing the third research question about personal factors impacting on resilience, based on Braun and Clarke (2013)

A similar procedure was applied to the contextual factors that impact on resilience. At first 13 codes were identified, which were not necessarily the most prevalent: autonomy – collaboration – collegiality – induction programmes – mentors – participation – professional learning community – recognition – school culture – support from family and friends – supportive democratic leadership – teacher-pupil relationships – trust (*Appendix 10*). Together these codes captured an important topic, relating to the context of the ECTs' teaching experiences. In a later phase, they were narrowed down to three themes class context, school context and larger context, as presented in *Table 5*. As explained above, the relevant parts of the ECTs' portfolios addressing the three research questions were also translated, coded and added to the analysis of the interview transcripts. This procedure was repeated for the third data set, the researcher's journal.

contextual (protective) factors (10)		
collaboration	class	micro
collegiality		
induction programmes		
mentors	school culture	meso
professional learning community/TEC		
recognition		
support from family and friends		
supportive democratic leadership	larger context	macro
teacher-pupil relationships		
trust		

Table 5: 3 codes and themes addressing the third research question about the contextual factors contributing to changes in ECTs' resilience

Analysing the researcher's journal at the same time as coding the ECTs' interviews and portfolios meant that she created an awareness of her own role in the generation of data for research purposes. Throughout the interview, the researcher tried to consider her actions and interactions with the ECTs and wrote about this in her reflexive journal.

> When coding the datasets, I now see the interview more as an object of analysis in its own right, not just a resource. By examining my own talk, I notice that a change in minimal responses influenced interview turns, and so I become aware of its impact on the ECT and thus the interview [Journal entry 53].

Another challenge that was experienced included decisions about the relative importance of themes. The significance of a theme does not depend on quantifiable measures but "it captures something important in relation to the overall research question" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 82). Relatedly, the following journal entry:

> I have considered including numbers when reporting themes but have decided against it. All research both qualitative and quantitative relies on honesty, trust and good research practice. Whether something is important for addressing the three research questions is not necessarily determined by whether many ECTs discussed it. I focus on what ECTs said, on the content of the language used in the interviews and the portfolios [Journal entry 78].

Consistency in the data analysis was paramount. Having the whole set of data in one software package encouraged the researcher to revisit the data over and over again, and helped to locate the evidence in a systematic way (Richards, 2015).

4.3 Concluding Remarks

This chapter critically discussed the methodology and methods, followed by a critical exploration of the data analysis process. It presented the codebook with the main codes and themes. Ideas that initially served their purpose well, such as Johnson's et al.'s (2014) framework, were adapted, allowing for the interpretation of new evidence. The Network Views in ATLAS.ti proved to be a useful tool to build the cases around the twelve ECTs. In Chapters 5, 6 and 7, it will be the researcher's task to make sense of disparate and challenging data and underpin the research accounts, by showing that the methods used for this research are flexible and adaptable but also rigorous and trusted.

Chapter Five

5. Presentation of Data

This research represents resilience as a dynamic process where it is taken to mean "the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (Masten et al., 1990: 425). In this Chapter, the stories told by Merlin, Adrian, Ralph, Cheryl, Vera, Miriam, Florence, Linda, Alice, Dorothy, Rachel and Trudy will emerge from the data. The data is presented in three major sections: the experiences, strategies, and personal and contextual factors that impacted on resilience, in line with the three research questions. Even though the ECTs' data are divided into these three sections for the sake of clarity, every individual ECT has his or her own story of resilience.

Originally, the interview data together with the line drawings, relational maps and critical incident reports were going to be presented separately from the ECTs' portfolios, as proposed in 3.4 and discussed in Chapter 4. However, as the researcher proceeded with the follow-up interviews and analysed the ECTs' portfolios, it was observed that similar themes, feelings and thoughts emerged. Furthermore, in the research questions the experiences, strategies and factors that impacted on resilience were the main focus. Hence, although the particular story of each ECT will be given value in the vignettes, and in this and subsequent chapters, the researcher wanted to critically discuss what was common amongst the twelve teachers.

Ravitch and Carl (2016) point out that, in order to recognise the voice of the ECTs, there is an attempt to distinguish between "the raw data (data excerpts) … the patterns that you [the researcher] discover in the data … and the next layer of meta-analytic patterns" (p. 288). Data from the interviews and portfolios are also organised in vignettes. In order to present a balance between giving voice to the ECTs and emphasizing the uniqueness of the stories they tell, the vignettes include not only what the ECTs said but also occasionally how they said it. The particular description of the ECTs in their setting, and their statements in real-time provide insight into the context of their teaching (Chase, 2005; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The stories are "rich in the subjective involvement of the

storyteller, offer an opportunity for the researcher to gather authentic, rich and respectable data" (Bauman, 1986 in Cohen et al., 2011: 455).

5.1 The Twelve Cases

Following Yin (2014), abbreviated vignettes are presented in *Appendix 8,* in the order of EFL teaching years, starting with the long-term students, moving on to the regular students, and finishing with the beginning students. The vignettes provide biographical and demographic data, including age category, qualifications and past occupations. Furthermore, they are intended to show the range of experiences amongst the ECTs, and also to present key strategies that contributed to changes in their resilience, which pertains to the second research question. As mentioned above, the three research questions about experiences, strategies and factors will be addressed in this chapter. The individual cases will serve as the "evidentiary base" (Yin, 2014: 186) for the research. They will be cited in the cross-case analysis by referring to specific reflections from the interviews, line drawings, relational maps, and ECTs' portfolios (as shown in *Table 2* in Chapter 3.6) building on the twelve cases. Miles et al. (2014) contend that it is important to fully comprehend the dynamics of each particular case, before moving on to the interpretation of the data and cross-case explanations. *Table 1* shows the ECTs' previous education, age ranges, gender, number of years enrolled at the TEC and employment status at the time of the interviews. A graphic representation of the Dutch Education System is presented in *Appendix 9*.

	Name	Previous education	Age range	Cohort	Gender	employment status
long-term	Merlin	HAVO	30s	2006	m	Part time
	Adrian	VWO	30s	2006	m	Full time
	Ralph	HAVO	40s	2007	m	Full time
	Cheryl	HAVO	20s	2008	f	Full time
regular	Vera	Communication Studies	30s	2010	f	Part time
	Miriam	Primary Teacher	50s	2010	f	Full time
	Florence	BA Translation	20s	2011	f	Part time
	Linda	BA German	20s	2011	f	Part time
beginning	Alice	HAVO	20s	2012	f	Part time
	Dorothy	BA English Lit	40s	2013	f	Part time
	Rachel	HAVO	20s	2014	f	Part time
	Trudy	MA Education	40s	2014	f	Part time

Table 1: profile of twelve ECTs

Note: HAVO is senior general secondary education and VWO is pre-university education in the Netherlands (See *Appendix 9*).

This research focuses on why the ECTs stay in the profession and so far all twelve have stayed. However, they are unqualified teachers, which might have an impact on their resilience. As explained in Chapter 1, there is a teacher shortage in the Netherlands, which means that from day one unqualified teachers are given exactly the same teaching responsibilities as their more experienced colleagues, who are on academic tenure. The long-term students Merlin, Adrian, Ralph and Cheryl have been studying at the TEC for more than 7 years. These four long-term ECTs started as full time students, accepted almost full time jobs and then enrolled part-time in the TEC, in order to finish their training and courses. Thus, both Merlin and Adrian have been unqualified teachers for more than nine years and at the same time they have been enrolled at the TEC, first as full-time and then as part-time students. Ralph has been teaching for more than eight years and was enrolled for more than five years as a full-time student before enrolling as a part-time student. The data collection started in 2014 and finished in 2015. At the end of this process, Cheryl is the only long-term student who recently graduated and had taught for seven years at the time of this research. Merlin, Ralph and Adrian are still in the process of finishing their final assignment, in order to complete their B.Ed. qualification. Three regular ECTs have obtained their B.Ed. qualifications, and Vera needs to finish her Action Research Report, in order to complete her programme of study. The four beginning ECTs are in their third year at the TEC.

5.2 Teaching Experiences that impact on the ECTs' Resilience

This section focuses on how the twelve ECTs managed challenges during their teaching. The findings are presented under themes identified from the total data analysis process. During the interviews and in their portfolios, critical incidents were discussed that required a personal action in response to issues experienced in the classroom, pertaining to the first research question, which deals with the kinds of experiences contributing to changes in their resilience. The ECTs reported in their portfolios and interviews that the following types of classroom experiences contributed to the changes: teaching experiences that focussed: firstly, on professional knowledge such as strong content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge; secondly, on professional practice such as the complex and unpredictable nature of teaching, the freedom to try new teaching ideas, and managing pupil behaviour; and thirdly, on professional engagement, such as

feeling isolated and positive supportive colleagues or administration (as shown in *Figure 1*).

Figure 1: coding tree: overview of themes, addressing Research Question 1 about teaching experiences that contribute to changes in ECTs' resilience

Definitions of these themes are provided in *Table 2* below. Teachers have professional knowledge when they are able to create an effective learning environment, for example, by matching EFL and the teacher's action to the needs of the pupils taking into account individual differences. Professional practice refers to pedagogically competent teachers who provide pupils with a sound base on which they can make choices, and engage with personal development in a safe learning and working environment. Teachers are professionally engaged, when they are competent at working together with their colleagues and contribute to a good educational climate at their school (Stichting Beroepskwaliteit Leraren, SBL, 2005).

Professional knowledge	Teaching experiences that deal with content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge;
Professional practice	Teaching experiences that deal with general pedagogical skills;
Professional engagement	Teaching experiences on how the ECTs engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community.

Table 2: definitions for the three themes addressing the first research question about the kinds of teaching experiences

The reflections of the ECTs are thematically presented, and their lived experience (Van Manen, 1990) is analysed in relation to resilience. In order to build the twelve cases and their stories the ECTs are further presented and grouped under the three themes addressing the first research question.

5.2.1 Professional Knowledge (Cases: Linda, Trudy and Cheryl)

The theme professional knowledge addresses teaching experiences that are subject related and deal with pedagogical content knowledge, as defined above. It is derived from two codes, as portrayed in *Figure 2*. In their interviews, Linda and Trudy addressed strong content knowledge as a major issue when discussing their resilience, and Cheryl mentioned pedagogical content knowledge.

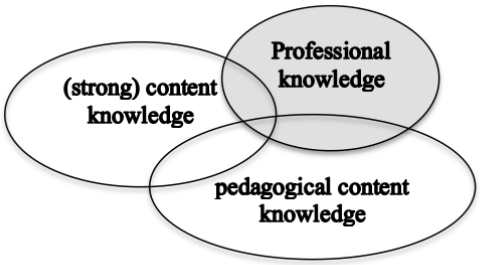


Figure 2: The emerging theme professional knowledge derived from two codes

5.2.1.1 Content Knowledge

Both Linda and Trudy were confident about their English grammar and vocabulary, which meant they could focus on how to get information across to pupils. Linda, originally from the United Kingdom, has a BA in German and Dutch, as mentioned in her vignette (See *Appendix 8.8*). She started the TEC after a yearlong school experience teaching EFL as a language assistant at a secondary school in the Netherlands. Linda explained her situation when she had just started teaching:

> **Linda**: "I thought that's a good point actually because the English side of it I think shouldn't be too much of a problem." [Interview 1]

Trudy, originally from the USA shared the same view:

> **Trudy**: I was like, "Hello, how are you?" [laughter] That was hard and that was a big class, it was a noisy class of 30-- mostly boys. Yes. I was confident in my subject. [Interview 1]

In her journal, the researcher observed that they were both confident English language speakers and both ECTs emphasized how they were not worried about their content

knowledge, but needed more pedagogical grounding. They felt that having a strong content knowledge in their content area of EFL helped their resilience building, i.e. they had "a strong grasp of subject matter" a characteristic of an effective teacher (Park & Lee, 2006: 237), as referred to in section 2.2.

5.2.1.2 Pedagogical Content Knowledge

There must be a commitment at school to allow ECTs to become pedagogically competent, and thus grow professionally (Day et al., 2006; Senior, 2006). Hargreaves (2003) points out that it "is through professional and personal development" (p.48) that teachers are formed (See section 2.4). This not only includes the development of subject skills, but also knowing how to anticipate and diagnose misunderstandings pupils make. Grossman et al. (2005) state that pedagogical content knowledge "differs from knowledge of generic teaching skills, because it is content specific" (p. 205).

Shulman (1987) defined pedagogical content knowledge as "that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding" (p.8). The part-time teacher education programme has a curricular divide between courses that deal with pedagogical content knowledge (in Dutch "vakdidactiek") and general pedagogical skills (in Dutch "onderwijskunde"). This division comes back in the ECTs' portfolios as they discuss issues relating to these two competences separately (Stichting Beroepskwaliteit Leraren, SBL, 2005). In their portfolios, three ECTs explained why they had opted for the communicative approach, as opposed to the grammar-translation method in their EFL teaching:

> **Linda**: I try to speak at the level of language they understand. [Portfolio]
>
> **Rachel**: You simplify your language somewhat so that they can learn new words. [Portfolio]
>
> **Florence**: I use real-life materials, such as magazines to introduce grammatical chunks to them. [Portfolio]

Linda, who is originally British, experienced difficulties in attuning to the Dutch way of addressing mixed abilities groups, and needed some guidance and professional training.

> **Linda:** the next challenge was of course I had a class of mixed levels, so we have few students who are actually VMBO Kader (pre-vocational secondary education) up to Atheneum (pre-university education) in the same class. It was, "how do I think of a way of making it so that they can all understand?" The group of children who are at the Atheneum level aren't getting bored and VMBO Kader look lost the whole time … I think I could do with some coaching and training. [Interview 1]

As a novice, she wanted to learn how to be able to differentiate between pupils and design new challenging materials in English for them. Respecting individual teachers' "self-defined needs for on-going learning not only bolsters teacher resilience but also is likely to boost student achievement" (Patterson et al., 2004: 9), as further discussed in Chapter 2.

The long-term ECT Cheryl agreed that it was essential to have access to appropriate professional development opportunities, as one of her pupils was slightly dyslexic and the TEC had never prepared her for this.

> **Cheryl**: … that kid taught me a lot about kids with special educational needs. … This pupil being lightly dyslexic as he is, I need to know how to assess his reading and writing ability in English. The TEC never offered a course on this and I hope my school will provide one in the near future. [Interview 2]

Cheryl, originally from Curaçao, had started the TEC as a full time student. Subsequently, she had obtained good marks for her four traineeships from her school and TEC mentors and was a confident language teacher. At the same time she realised that appropriate just-in-time professional development could help her with the special educational needs children that were present in some of her classes. According to Kennedy and McKay (2011), teachers would learn from professional development, as long as it is relevant to their own classroom context, the so-called just-in-time workshops. Cheryl sought to assess her pupil's reading and writing abilities in English, so that she could guide him better in improving his reading and writing skills. Thus, a key feature of Linda and Cheryl's experiences was that they recognised the importance of deepening their pedagogical content knowledge, in order to teach English to diverse pupils at different stages. Johnson et al. (2012) state that when promoting resilience ECTs should "identify areas of need, set goals and access the professional development and resources needed to achieve them" (p.30), which is what both Linda and Cheryl reflect on in the two excerpts presented above.

5.2.2 Professional Practice (Cases: Ralph, Miriam, Alice, Florence, Rachel and Vera)

The theme professional practice addresses teaching experiences that deal with general pedagogical skills, as was defined in section 5.2. It addresses three codes, as portrayed in *Figure 3* below. In this section, data is presented from the narratives of Ralph, Miriam and Alice in which they share their views about the complex and unpredictable nature of teaching; Florence and Rachel address the freedom to try new teaching ideas; and Vera discusses managing pupil behaviour.

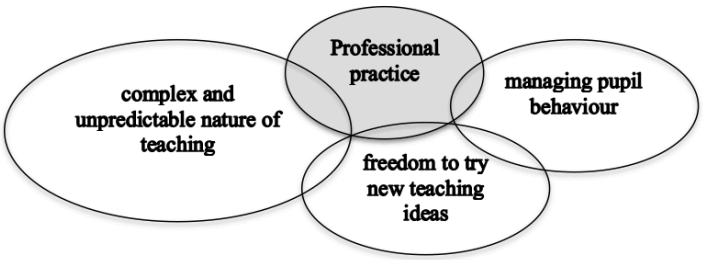


Figure 3: The emerging theme professional practice derived from three codes

5.2.2.1 Complex and Unpredictable Nature of Teaching

The long-term ECT Ralph, eighth year trainee teacher was very upset when one of his colleagues was suddenly suspended. It really made an impact on him, and he couldn't share this with his pupils, which made it extra hard. The Management of his school did not provide him with any details, which made him feel powerless and frustrated.

> **Ralph**: It completely came out of the blue, because she was not professional and stuff like that. And then the top chief of [name of school] came, and -- The person who was put on gardening leave, we loved her, to us she was always professional, and well, this completely, this was -- The top guy from [name of school], the director there, he handled this very unprofessionally, everybody was mad. And I cycled to school feeling awful. And the kids, of course, they didn't know, so you can't -- share that. … that's the worst thing that's happened this term. [Interview 1]

Tension built up in the mind of Ralph, when he felt that the Management was not behaving professionally, and he found himself struggling to maintain his own standards towards his classes. He wanted to share his feelings of uncertainty and anxiety with his

pupils but realised he could not. His inability to find a suitable strategy for coping with this unpredictable and complex situation made him vulnerable and consequently made a claim on Ralph's professional practice. Ralph's vulnerability posed challenges to a successful adaptation, and thus impacted on his feelings of resilience. Lasky (2005) proposes that vulnerability, considered to be the opposite of resilience, is triggered by a critical incident, such as described above, resulting in individuals feeling as if they have "no direct control over factors that affect their immediate context, or feel they are being "forced" to act in ways that are inconsistent with their core beliefs and values" (ibid.: 901).

Miriam, was a regular ECT with a previous B.Ed. in primary education. At a parents' evening an unpredictable incident occurred, when Miriam met a pupil's brother who refused to shake hands with her. In the quotation below, *to give a hand* (in Dutch: "een hand geven") means *to shake hands* in English.

> **Miriam**: So, I stand in the doorway with my colleague, and father gives me a hand, my student gives me a hand, but his brother doesn't, and he says, "I'm not allowed to give you a hand." I said, "Well, I have a problem with that, because it's customary in the Netherlands to shake hands, especially when you don't know one another." The brother then says: "I'm not going to do it, I'm here to discuss my brother's grades and not this." [Interview 1]

She was determined to resolve this issue on her own, even though her Management offered to take over and resolve it. She assumed he did not want to shake hands because she was a female teacher. In an interview excerpt in her vignette (See *Appendix 8.6*), she explained that at times she had a short fuse because of exam times at the TEC. For other ECTs teaching certain classes was a matter of survival. They referred to unpredictable incidents as "dealing with things as they pop up" [Dorothy, portfolio] and "side stepping" [Alice, portfolio]. Dorothy made pragmatic classroom decisions not based "on deep-seated beliefs but on how to keep control of the class and survive until the end of the lesson" [Portfolio].

A further critical incident relating to the complex nature of teaching was narrated by the beginning ECT Alice. She started as a supply teacher, and said that her first job was "basically surviving" for her as explained in her vignette (See *Appendix 8.9*). Trying to juggle teaching and studying was a dilemma. She also commented she found it hard to

transition from teaching pupils to grading papers every day, disciplining them and creating purposeful learning plans, which are all very different skills required from a novice from day one of their teaching career (Grossman et al., 2005).

> **Alice:** You have to deal with so many different things in class with 30 pupils. When you're studying it's even harder, I think, because you have your studies, your course that you have to finish and your job that you want to keep of course. [Interview 1]

Stories about complex and unpredictable incidents, such as in Alice's case keeping a large class with diverse abilities engaged and being *a Jack of all trades and a master of none*, was a recurring topic in the ECTs' interviews and portfolios. ECTs are constantly subjected to scrutiny. Ralph and Miriam above both described feelings of uncertainty and expressed that teaching is demanding work, identified by Masten et al. (1990) as "successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (p. 425), the definition of resilience central to this research. Weasmer and Woods (2000) refer to the encounter with the professional reality as "baptism by fire" (p. 171), which could well be applied to the stories told by the ECTs Ralph, Miriam and Alice.

5.2.2.2 Freedom to try New Teaching Ideas

Florence, with a B.A. in translation, was a regular ECT who graduated in 2015. During a traineeship in the USA, she discovered her motivation to work with children. Therefore, she decided to give up her career as a translator to teach English to teenagers. Her definition of resilience was: being flexible and adapting teaching to meet pupils' needs (See her vignette in *Appendix 8.7*). What built Florence's resilience was making a clear decision to create her own classroom materials, which is the second code relating to professional practice. This is illustrated by the following reflection.

> **Florence**: … I learned a lot. I became more confident for sure and I was able to develop teaching materials, I did a lot of WebQuests to help pupils becoming independent learners. [Interview 2]

Florence experienced positive emotions while designing her own WebQuests, which contributed to her feelings of resilience. As a pedagogically competent teacher she was able to "encourage personal development for pupils in a safe learning and working

environment" (Florence, portfolio). The importance of combining pedagogical knowledge and understanding pupil thinking, as a protective factor in the development of teacher resilience, was documented by Beltman et al. (2011), further discussed in Chapter 2.

Rachel, a first year student, was ready to move to another type of school in the Netherlands. Like Florence, she wanted to have the freedom to try out new teaching ideas. In her portfolio she states: "I would like to work with task based assignments so that we move away from the course book and try out something new." She was keen to practise positive discipline, which to her was not possible at her current school. She did not want to discipline or control her pupils through imposition, but through communication and mutual respect. She was an avid natural parenting supporter and was keen to change things at her school.

> **Rachel**: Natural parenting is not about having any boundaries. It's about maintaining your boundaries in a different way [Portfolio]

Rachel's commitment to natural parenting was about responding with sensitivity to her own child, and also to her pupils, helping them by "communicating gently rather than punishing tantrums" [Interview 1]. By engaging her pupils with new and challenging task based assignments, she "wanted to motivate pupils and create a positive contact with them" [Portfolio]. Reflecting on this in her journal, the researcher noted the importance of creating effective teaching sessions for pupils, and how "positive emotions fuel psychological resilience" (Day et al., 2007: 196), which will be further critically discussed in Chapter 6.

Both Trudy and Linda, who have English as their first language, also agreed that it was important to be allowed freedom to try new teaching ideas. Trudy referred to her TEC materials and recommended texts, when designing her classroom materials:

> **Trudy**: Well, I'm now able to put a lot more of my thoughts, and energy in the classes in collaboration with my colleagues, which is really nice. … I've now come with another plan of doing it [speaking skills] in a different way, and that's what we're adapting. Which is really neat to do. [Interview 2]

Finally, Linda talked about how important it was to try out new strategies:

> **Linda**: I don't really like to say: let's explain the grammar and now you fill in the gaps. It doesn't really make that link to the rule properly, I don't think. I thought of a way of trying to create a sort of activity, where they have to do something with it first. [Interview 2]

Both regular and beginning ECTs Florence, Rachel, Trudy, and Linda felt energized when designing their own classroom activities and materials. This is also identified by Park and Lee (2006) who state that being "flexible and imaginative" (p. 237) is fundamental for being an effective teacher, an issue discussed more fully in section 2.2. Being professionally stretched in this way allowed the ECTs to grow as language teachers, which was identified as a major personal factor for enhancing teachers' resilience by Beltman et al. (2011), discussed in section 2.1.3.

5.2.2.3 Managing Pupil Behaviour

The majority of the ECTs interviewed acknowledged that some pupils were very challenging to teach, relating to the third code *managing pupil behaviour*. The regular ECT Vera found herself in the middle of a fight between two of her pupils.

> **Vera**: two boys, yes and I'm just a small teacher, so once it escalated in my classroom … between two boys. And well, I did stand between them, but -- I called the janitor as well and fortunately he was there before it went -- and the biggest problem is that the rest of the group, they're enjoying it … Yes. It was terribly frightening. [Interview 1]

In her interview (See *Appendix 8.5*), Vera stated that you should never become really angry, just act it. Similarly, Florence, a regular ECT, who changed her career as a translator into a teaching career, also said that you could not be taught everything, because you needed to experience things first. She discussed how managing pupil behaviour remained problematic to her:

> **Florence:** Well, just the students stepping over my boundaries, I would say, and me telling them that they should do something, and that certain behaviour is not allowed, and they would continue …[Interview 2]

Finally, Trudy and Rachel explained how disruptive behaviour affected them:

> **Trudy**: I know classroom management is something that I always have to work on just because I am too nice, so I know that is one of my flaws, if you want to say that. [Interview 1]

> **Rachel**: I started the lesson feeling quite confident, because the lesson before went pretty well and I said: "Do the text, all this in English" and they just looked at me like: "I'm not going to listen to you. You're just an intern, I can just turn around and talk to my classmates and what are you going to do?" And that, it felt like they were testing me. [Interview 2]

The regular ECTs Vera and Florence, and the beginning ECTs Trudy and Rachel, all shared stories of problems with classroom discipline. Resilient teachers are patient and competent at forming relationships with pupils displaying difficult behaviour (Howard & Johnson, 2004), as reflected upon in section 2.1.2. When discussing experiences that related to their professional practice, the ECTs often focused on the problems of managing pupil behaviour rather than creating challenging learning environments, which will be further critically discussed in Chapter 6.

5.2.3 Professional Engagement (Cases: Merlin, Dorothy and Adrian)

The theme professional engagement addresses teaching experiences, which reflect how the ECTs engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community. It addresses two codes, as portrayed in *Figure 4* below. The final three cases introduced in this section, are the long-term ECT Merlin, who talks about his feelings of being isolated, followed by another long-term ECT Adrian, and the beginning ECT Dorothy, who both address issues about supportive colleagues in their interviews and portfolios. Dorothy, however, refers to her colleagues positively and Adrian explains he does not depend on them.

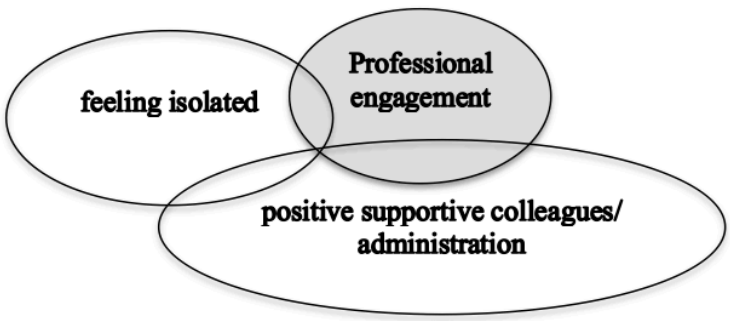


Figure 4: The emerging theme professional engagement derived from two codes

5.2.3.1 Feeling isolated

Merlin, ninth year trainee teacher, had changed jobs every three years because of his uncertified status. This meant that he had to start from scratch every time he was given a new temporary contract, therefore he felt excluded from the rest of the team.

> **Merlin:** All the meetings are planned on Monday, from five till six pm, and I always have to teach then. [Interview 1]

Similarly, both Cheryl, a long-term ECT, who worked with children with dyslexia and Alice a regular ECT, who referred to her teaching as "basically surviving", told stories about feeling isolated and lonely.

> **Cheryl**: … So once months go by, and nobody tells you anything, it's so, it starts eating away at you. [Interview 1]

> **Alice:** I was completely alone. I felt completely alone. They left me all by myself and-- the teacher before me had made such a mess out of those two year groups, that it was more cleaning up and getting them ready for their final exams. [Interview 1]

Rachel, who previously experienced feelings of frustration, inadequacy and isolation, shared a story about feeling powerless:

> **Rachel**: I've got a group of friends with whom I talk about natural parenting and stuff, and sometimes I ask them about teaching because two of them are teachers. But both of them stopped as teachers, because they couldn't cope with the mainstream thoughts on how to educate children. Yes, I'm close to them, yes we pretty much share everything and they help me sometimes, as I feel so alone and so "onmachtig" (powerless). [Interview 2]

The long-term ECTs Merlin and Cheryl, the regular ECT Alice, and the beginning ECT Rachel also experienced feelings of frustration, inadequacy and isolation. They thought they had been left to sink or swim (Howe, 2006). Another critical incident, relating to the development of their resilience, which emerged in the ECTs' stories was the feeling of having to cope on their own without any assistance. Scherff (2008) points out that "Novice teachers repeatedly cite the first years in the classroom as unsupportive and lonely" (p. 1319). Beltman et al. (2011) entitled their review of the literature regarding teacher resilience "Thriving not just surviving", referring to ECTs who struggle in their first years. They identified individual threatening factors, including a lack of support. They also pinpointed perseverance and a positive attitude as two possible protective

factors facilitating the opportunity to "bounce back in the face of potential risks" (Patterson et al., 2004: 3) as discussed in section 2.1.2. ECTs prefer to work in a school, in which they feel they belong (Le Cornu, 2009), also further discussed in section 2.1.3.

The ECTs' classes were based on shared understandings about how the ECTs, in this case Merlin, Cheryl, Alice, Rachel, and their pupils interacted with one another. Creating safe and supportive environments, which allow all teachers to be leaders of learning, enrich teachers and help foster their resilience (Johnson et al., 2012; Doney, 2013). Senior (2006) suggests that "language classes operate as communities each with its own collection of shared understandings that have been built up over time" (p. 200). In her journal, the researcher observed the importance of belonging to a particular school, with its own situational understandings, in relation to feeling resilient. This is an issue for further investigation in Chapter 6.

5.2.3.2 Positive Supportive Colleagues and Administration

In the following reflections, Dorothy, Adrian, Linda, Trudy and Vera considered that colleagues can provide inspiration (Anderson & Olsen, 2006) and can help with managing challenges (Brunetti, 2006), both protective factors that relate to teacher resilience. The beginning ECT Dorothy, originally from Italy, stated that it was important for new teachers to receive support from their colleagues and Management. Developing strong, positive and supportive relationships, as was the case with Dorothy, is a marker of resilience (Johnson et al., 2012). She had a very encouraging Manager who stimulated her to take up English because the opportunities to teach Italian were reducing each year. Whenever she needed help, she consulted her colleagues:

> **Dorothy**: There is a team of teachers, who work with the same students, who also support me. So after the lessons, I may report back how things were going and seek their help. [Interview 2]

Adrian has been a supply teacher for the past three years, which meant that he had the demanding task of substituting different EFL teachers, within a time-span of a few months. He was a long-term ECT, with nine years of teaching experience and appeared to have different ideas from Dorothy, because in his second interview he said:

> **Adrian**: I'm glad that I don't have to be such an integral part of a school because yes, I could do without that [meetings] to be honest… I think for them [his colleagues] it's a developmental tool. But I rarely see any real progress being made in these things… often these meetings result in dialogues, and there are 15 other people sitting there not doing anything, so it doesn't seem very effective… the others are sitting and pretending to listen, while they are playing with their phones, which is basically what happens in a classroom. [Interview 2]

In contrast to Dorothy, Adrian did not consider meetings to be helpful in his growth to become a resilient professional, but he did suggest it might be a useful tool for others. He referred to his weekly meetings as "bureaucracy and stagnation that should really be progress" [Interview 2].

The beginning ECT Trudy thoroughly enjoyed mentoring, whereas Linda, the regular ECT with previous qualifications in German and Dutch, struggled with her mentoring task and after consultation with her Management decided not to continue with it. In the second interview, Linda drew a line that showed quite a dip, as shown in *Figure 5,* because Management of her school had made her mentor of 15 pupils.

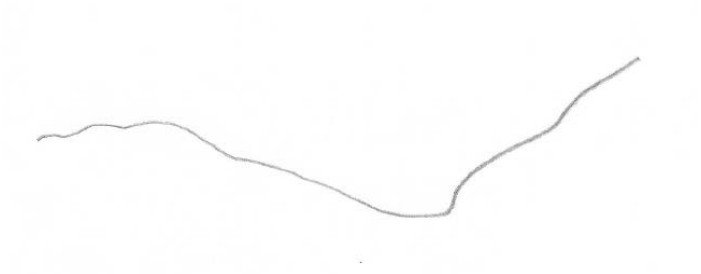


Figure 5: Linda's representation of her teaching experience

At the same time she elaborated upon this experience during her interview.

> **Linda**: Many of them have difficulties with concentration, they have ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), … so that disrupts the classroom balance as well. [Interview 2]

Additionally, her pupils were required to come up with their own learning objectives every week by deciding on a weekly timetable, under her guidance. As Linda was not used to the freedom given to these Dutch pupils, she struggled to perform the role of mentor. In the end she had to give up mentoring. Trudy, on the other hand, was also assigned the task of mentoring 24 pupils and really enjoyed it. As explained in the vignette (See *Appendix 8.12*), Trudy was asked to do home visits, which she regarded as

a real asset to her work. Analysis of the data indicates that if the circumstances in which the ECTs worked became more complex – as in the case of Linda – it took more energy to manage their teaching and the more likely it was that their resilience was tested (Day et al., 2007). In her journal, the researcher observed this was an issue for further investigation in Chapter 6.

Vera, a mother of two young children, felt at times overwhelmed by multiple demands. As well as her teaching tasks, she had her second child, her father was hospitalised, and she still had to finish several courses at the TEC. Fortunately, Vera had very supportive colleagues who would substitute for her when necessary:

> **Vera**: Unfortunately, he [the team leader] is leaving next year. He's a real people person. He understands when I come with questions about things that just don't work with the kids and with the TEC and everything. Then he's quick in saying, "Okay Vera, we will try and work this out. I'll ask someone to take over your classes, so you can leave earlier." [Interview 2]

This illustrates Vera's positive approach and her capacity to cope effectively despite challenges and adversities, as discussed in section 2.1.2. Resilience is for her a shared process where collegial relationships play a vital role. When discussing critical incidents that related to professional engagement, the ECTs focused on establishing meaningful relationships within their school environments.

During the interviews and in their portfolios, strategies were discussed, pertaining to the second research question addressing the types of strategies that the ECTs used in their first years. The next section focuses on what strategies contributed to changes in the ECTs' resilience.

5.3 Strategies that impact on the ECTs' Resilience

For many ECTs it was important to demonstrate effective classroom management strategies and maintain an authoritative style, rather than rely on controlling measures such as punishments. *Figure 6* presents an overview of the four main themes, which were identified as a result of analysis of the data relating to strategies. The vignettes in *Appendix 8* are also built around a particular strategy employed by the ECTs as a response to a critical incident.

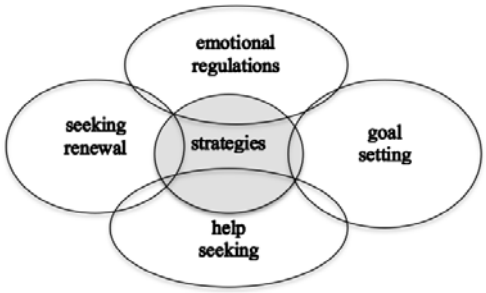


Figure 6: coding tree, overview of themes addressing Research Question 2 about strategies that contribute to changes in ECTs' resilience

5.3.1 Goal Setting

In the codebook in *Appendix 10*, goal setting was defined as "choosing a specific performance goal", one of the seven competences in the TEC curriculum (Stichting Beroepskwaliteit Leraren, SBL, 2005), see *Appendix 13*. The ECTs are required to refer to these competences when writing their portfolios, because they form part of the TEC curriculum. The portfolio includes forms entitled "goal setting worksheets" that specify a particular performance goal, following the SMART rules. This acronym refers to the formulation of the performance goals. They need to be Specific - Measurable – Attainable – Relevant and Time bound.

In the following reflections the ECTs identified *persevering by maintaining a positive attitude* as a main performance goal, employed to enhance their resilience. As referred to in Chapter 2.4, Zepeda et al. (2014) contend adult learning is "self-directed, … and goal oriented" (p. 301). Attempting to be optimistic, maintaining a work-life balance, setting boundaries and not being defeated by classroom challenges also emerged as important performance goal setting strategies from many ECTs' portfolios. Frequently, these performance goals referred to general pedagogical skills as opposed to content pedagogical knowledge. Miriam, an experienced primary teacher, talked specifically about maintaining a positive attitude in the face of challenge as her performance goal, and Cheryl, who previously explained that she worked with children with dyslexia, wanted to help her pupils develop their problem solving skills. The reflection notes the specific code in italics (see also the final codebook in *Table 2*, Chapter 4.2).

> **Miriam**: Not just a red pen, red, red but also the positive feedback and that sort of helps students to feel good about their writing and that gives them confidence. *(persevering)* [Interview 1]

> **Cheryl**: I think the resilience I have is in pinpointing what does not work and what works. Not as fast as I would want, sometimes I really have to trip and fall flat on my face, but I do certainly think sometimes after school … try to replay that interaction with the kids, what are they missing in their thinking steps? *(persevering)* [Interview 1]

Merlin, who saw it as his prime goal to be student centred, took disciplinary action to improve unacceptable behaviour from a particular pupil by confronting him in class. He felt, however, that he had created his own problem by addressing one particular pupil in class, and allowing the rest of the class to share their opinions about the incident.

> **Merlin**: Well, in my first few years of teaching, of course, I did that a few times. But that's absolutely the worst thing you can do, because then the whole class has an opinion about it. And of course, if somebody has a certain position in the class, they have to make sure that that position is defended, so that's absolutely not a thing that I'm a big fan doing. *(setting boundaries)* [Interview 1]

He explained this was clearly a beginner's mistake and that in future he would say to the pupil: "I will see you after class." which he saw as his performance goal. He realized with hindsight that he should have spoken to the pupil face to face at the end of this particular class instead of confronting the pupil on the spot. Setting your boundaries by imposing a time out from the room was the best strategy, when challenging behaviour is escalating, according to Merlin. In the above-mentioned reflections the ECTs Miriam, Cheryl and Merlin shared the goal setting strategy that had impacted on their resilience.

5.3.2 Emotional Regulation

Dorothy, who was an experienced teacher of Italian when she started at the TEC, had an encounter with a pupil, which upset her so much that she ended up going to the toilet to have a cry, further explained in her vignette (See *Appendix 8.10*). After having tried to confiscate a mobile phone of one of her pupils, he was aggressive towards her.

> **Dorothy**: I didn't want the situation to escalate, and I thought I'm the teacher, and I have to set the right example. I didn't know that by touching his mobile, I would upset him so much [Interview 1].

Adrian shared a similar story, in which he accidentally forgot to return the mobile phone to the pupil, after having confiscated it before the weekend. His principal told him to go to the boy's home and return the phone:

> **Adrian**: I dragged myself through dust and said, "I'm sorry I took your phone." These are things that you will learn from experience. It's not something that you can teach me here [TEC]. [Interview 1]

All twelve cases identified emotional regulation as a main strategy used to enhance their resilience, which is part of the core reflection approach of Korthagen (2004), as discussed in 2.4.1. In the codebook in *Appendix 10,* emotional regulation was defined as how the ECTs' emotions guide their professional practices and decisions (Mansfield et al., 2012). Resilience is about making the best of things, about being able to cope with the shocks or bumps, and bounce back and forwards. The outcome of a classroom event cannot be predetermined, even though the lesson was thoroughly planned. Two of the long-term ECTs, Adrian and Merlin, demonstrated how they tried to learn from their mistakes, in the following reflections.

> **Adrian**: I think that you have to accept the things you cannot change and change the things you cannot accept. [Interview 2]

> **Merlin**: It's whenever you hit a bump, that you're able to actually look back at it and think, "Well, why did I hit a bump? What's my own part in having hit a bump? And how can I do better next time?" [Interview 1]

The ECTs experienced anxiety because of the complexity of learning to teach, and shared their frustration or anger. Some ECTs sought to first and foremost build positive relationships with their pupils, based on order and compassion. In their portfolios they state:

> **Rachel**: I want to be a positive role model for my pupils. [Portfolio]

> **Miriam**: Whenever a pupil gives up, I try to encourage him or her. If they don't understand the exercise, I will explain it as often as they want to. [Portfolio]

> **Linda**: I try to maintain a positive attitude towards my pupils, because giving up is not really an option for them. [Portfolio]

The ECTs do not only maintain positivity in their work, but also try to transmit this to their pupils when they struggle with their academic work. Consistent with the literature (Howard & Johnson, 2004; Gu & Day, 2007; Katkus, 2007; Nieto, 2003, 2009), positive

relationships with both pupils and colleagues may result in the ECTs wanting to remain in the profession.

5.3.3 Seeking Renewal

The ECTs identified seeking renewal, in the form of designing their own classroom materials, as a main strategy to enhance their resilience. Sometimes certain task-based activities might not work and so ECTs try new things. The ECTs discussed teaching experiences, which required them to try out new ideas, whether in the form of materials or content of instruction. Alice explained how she was always allowed to try out something new, as long as it complied with the school policy. Dorothy started a new teaching approach to tailor lessons to pupils' needs, and Vera adapted her disciplinary rules, which meant seeking renewal by changing her content of instruction.

> **Alice**: My mentor R. says "Well, if you want to try that, please do. Hand me the materials, so I can have a look at them and try them out as well, and we can see what we can do about it." And he lets me do pretty much anything as long as it's within school rules. [Interview 2]

> **Dorothy**: These students have personal problems at home. I mean really very serious problems, so I talked with the team, and then I considered starting another teaching method, which is not the usual one. [Interview 1]

> **Vera**: I decided to adapt the rules for these particular groups. My disciplinary rules are a lot stricter now. Pupils who do not behave according to the code of conduct get immediate detention. There is no preliminary warning ... I have noticed how effective this is. [Portfolio]

Sargent (2003) refers to this as "the freedom to take risks" (p. 45), discussed in section 2.1.3. Seeking renewal is about bringing your pedagogy alive by "striving to inject a feeling of vitality into their lessons" (Senior, 2006: 186). Both Alice and Dorothy tried to engage their pupils by means of material development and through the medium of the target language. Relatedly, the following journal entry:

> Capturing pupils' interests is essential, when you want to make your sessions more relevant and memorable. As an experienced teacher you have a large reservoir of materials whereas as a novice you discover on your own what works by means of experimenting and by trial and error. [Journal entry 33]

Encouraging ECTs to learn by means of experimentation, discovering or trial and error as a strategy to enhance their resilience will be further critically discussed in Chapter 6.

5.3.4 Help Seeking

It was often the ability to retain in their minds clear strategies for their classes that enabled the ECTs to grow in their profession. Certain strategies did not always work, therefore ECTs had to try out new approaches, as demonstrated by Dorothy and Miriam in the reflections below. Dorothy went to her school-based mentor and Miriam to her TEC based mentor. The ECTs' resilience seemed to come from fostering good relationships with significant others, by asking their learning community for strategies, on how to respond to pupils' challenging behaviour (Bobek, 2002; Sutton, 2004; Day & Gu, 2007; Castro et al., 2010; Paris, 2013).

In the codebook in *Appendix 10,* help seeking was defined as "how ECTs seek out positive relationships with mentors and fellow students and accept support from colleagues." In the reflections below, ECTs contributed to collegial discussions and applied constructive feedback from colleagues to improve professional knowledge and practice, which is one of the seven competences required within the National Standards for Teachers (Stichting Beroepskwaliteit Leraren, SBL, 2005). The following is feedback in Dorothy's portfolio after an intervision session with her school-based mentor:

> **Dorothy**: There is quite a range of pupil ability in your class, which you carefully consider when creating in class work and assignments … One thing to improve may be increasing the wait time after asking a question. [Portfolio]

Dorothy demonstrated how she sought out support from her school-based mentor by wanting to discuss in detail how to teach her mixed ability group. The mentor observed some of her classes and provided her with feedback.

Some ECTs also engaged with TEC teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of their professional learning activities, when addressing pupils' learning needs. The regular ECT Miriam who was aware that she was less patient during TEC exam weeks, once had a pencil case thrown at her when she turned her back to the group. She explained how she

was first hesitant about asking for help, but then decided to go to her TEC mentor. He told her to just remain seated behind her desk the next hour.

> **Miriam**: I talked about it with L. (TEC mentor) in the first year at the TEC. He taught us pedagogical content knowledge and also soft skills and he gave me the advice, and it really worked ... "I'm not going to walk around in class. I'm not going to explain anything using the whiteboard, or the SmartBoard. That's finished. This is the way we do things from now on." [Interview 2]

After consultation, Miriam adapted her teaching approach. Within two lessons, the class decided it was boring to have a teacher seated at her desk all the time, so she could go back to her old routine. Even though the process of asking for help may have been difficult for some ECTs, as they wanted to appear competent, it "becomes a way of self-preservation, of establishing one's own resilience" (Castro et al. 2010: 624).

5.4 Factors that impact on the ECTs' Resilience

This section is concerned with how the twelve ECTs coped with their first teaching experiences, by drawing on personal and contextual factors, pertaining to the third research question (See Chapter 4, *Table 5*). It will discuss data that illustrates some challenging episodes in the ECTs' professional lives.

The ECTs' stories are presented within two major sub-sections: personal and contextual factors. As explained in Chapter 4 both positive (labelled resources) and negative descriptions (labelled challenges) were assigned to all themes in ATLAS.ti. As will be seen in the ECTs' stories the factors that impact on their resilience interact in complex ways, as illustrated by *Figure 1* in Chapter 2.

5.4.1 Personal Factors

The personal factors are further divided into 3 themes: self-efficacy, self-reflection and sense of purpose/ agency, as shown in *Figure 7*.

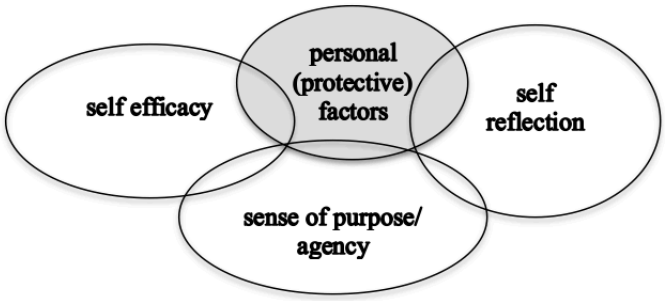


Figure 7: coding tree, overview of themes addressing Research Question 3 about personal factors that impact on ECTs' resilience

5.4.1.1 Self-efficacy

In the codebook in *Appendix 10*, self-efficacy is taken to mean "a high level belief in one's own abilities" (Burke & Stets, 2009: 117). ECTs with higher self-efficacy are more likely to engage in "difficult behaviors that they have not tried before because they have the general expectancy of ability to accomplish outcomes" (ibid.). The opposite is also true, where ECTs with a low level of self-efficacy are more likely to shy away from problematic situations (Woolfolk et al., 1990). The VITAE project (Day et al., 2006) identified *identity* and *efficacy* in the classroom, as personal attributes for teachers in the professional life phase of four to seven years of teaching experience. Both Cheryl and Adrian, who share their reflections below, belong to this phase (See section 2.2.1).

The following quotations indicate the range of self-efficacy starting with the long-term ECTs Cheryl and Adrian. The reflection notes the relevant code in italics.

> **Cheryl**: What am I particularly proud of is my classroom management. I cannot function without it … I'm not the shouting kind of person. I take much pride in being a people person. *(take pride in*) [Interview 2]

> **Adrian**: I've become a better person through all these difficult years. It made me more balanced and made me capable of stepping back and looking at the bigger picture because if I hadn't, then I wouldn't be sitting here. Not as dramatic as all that, but I'd be driving a taxi *(ability to persist).* [Interview 1]

Both Cheryl and Adrian indicated that, after years of teaching, they believed in their own abilities and were familiar with a range of difficult pupil behaviour.

Linda, a regular ECT, and Trudy, a beginning ECT, were at the start of their career when they reflected the following:

> **Linda**: it was just realizing that teaching isn't just English, which I felt confident about. It's three quarters dealing with teenagers. That was a learning moment (*ability to succeed with a task*). [Interview 2]
>
> **Trudy**: The nice thing about VMBO (pre-vocational secondary education), and our locations is that we can be pretty free and open as long as we end with the same results. So I do my own thing and they do their own thing (*ability to succeed with a task*). [Interview 2]

Linda and Trudy focused on their own performance rather than their pupils' learning. Both cases reflected that despite experiencing challenges in their first years, they continued as EFL teachers and developed resilient qualities. Resilient teachers bounce back after encountering challenges in their work. In this process, personal factors such as self-efficacy and a sense of agency are influencing factors (Castro et al., 2010).

5.4.1.2 Self Reflection

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) labelled the outcome of reflection on day-to-day practice *"knowledge-in-practice"*(p. 262), as discussed in section 2.4. Hattie (2009) called it "deliberative practice" (p. 30), which was further discussed in section 2.2. The following quotations show a range of reflections, moving from being self critical to portfolio entries about classroom activities. Adrian is a long-term ECT, Miriam, Florence and Linda are regular ECTs and Alice is a beginning ECT.

> **Adrian**: I have ADHD, I'm very opinionated, and big, loud, and sometimes not as modest as I should be, but yes, my colleagues have learned to deal with that in a certain way, and I've no real regrets, I think other than that I could have finished this B.Ed. in 2005-6 (*being self critical*). [Interview 2]
>
> **Miriam**: After experiencing uncertainty, I step back and analyse my actions. When there is an exam week at the TEC, I have a shorter fuse, no energy and I send them out after one warning. I explain to them why I get mad (*negotiate tensions of teaching*). [Portfolio]
>
> **Florence:** I finally see the overall picture when dealing with problematic pupils (*negotiate tensions of teaching*). [Portfolio]
>
> **Linda:** Taking the TEC course on didactics reinforced some of my goals, such as being consistent with my pupils (*negotiate tensions of teaching*). [Portfolio]

> **Alice**: I ask students to do an evaluation of the class and use their comments and suggestions in my planning for the next session (*employ proactive ways of coping*). [Portfolio]

Adrian was critical about his attitude towards his colleagues and students. Miriam, Florence and Linda negotiated dilemmas and tensions of teaching, when struggling to maintain a balance between their TEC exams, their school commitments and their private lives. All four ECTs "had the ability … to succeed under varying conditions and the capability to cope with new challenges" (p. 623), which according to Schelvis et al. (2014) is equivalent to resilience. Alice is aware that good pupil feedback may help her development, which can be seen as a marker for resilience (Johnson et al., 2012). All ECTs engaged in self-reflection in varying degrees. This accommodated new and different ways of thinking which can be seen to have helped increase their resilience.

5.4.1.3 Sense of Purpose / Agency

Agency is defined as "the capacity to act" and it is manifested in the ECTs' abilities to recall, to select, and to appropriately apply "schemas of action that they have developed through past interactions" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998: 975). As mentioned previously, Rachel was an avid natural parenting supporter and was keen to change things at her school. For her next traineeship, Rachel set herself a clear goal.

> **Rachel**: So I know that I want to work on that structure but then, how do I enforce rules without punishing kids, because that's not in my way of doing things and it makes me feel stressed (*goal directed*). [Interview 1]

Rachel's commitment and engagement are relevant for resilience (Schelvis et al., 2014). As stated previously, Adrian felt he was an accomplished ninth year trainee teacher who also claimed that you needed to be committed to your job a hundred per cent. Even though he had quite a few personal challenges he did not want to give up teaching.

> **Adrian**: When you do this job at 50-60 % of your normal capacity, then that will really grind you down because it's not something like go to an office, hide myself in a cubicle behind a computer screen for the rest of the day, that I still do an OK job, I have to be on the ball all the time when I teach (*purposeful*). [Interview 1]

Both Rachel and Adrian believed in their intentional actions and tried to deal with the different challenges in their internships. Rather than seeing agency as an individual

capacity that ECTs have it is something that they do. “This concept of agency highlights that actors always act by means of their environment” (Biesta & Tedder, 2007: 137).

Agency was achieved in concrete situations as can be seen in the supply teacher Adrian’s reflection:

> **Adrian**: “I love interacting with students … I’ll say I did my best I’ve brought these kids to a point where they can go to their final year and they’ll go… So that made me – gave me a little boost and then I thought well, on to the next job” (*sense of agency*) [Interview 2].

Adrian emphasized what was practically possible and feasible with his pupils in a temporary job as a supply teacher, and at the same time he evaluated the issues at hand. Day (2008) contends that a sense of agency is fundamental to a teacher’s motivation and commitment (See Chapter 2.1.3). Furthermore, Day and Gu (2013), when researching resilience, emphasize the capacity to maintain “a sense of agency in the everyday worlds in which teachers teach” (p. 26), discussed in section 2.1.2.

5.4.2 Contextual Factors

The contextual factors are divided into 3 themes: classroom context, school context and larger context, as shown in *Figure 8*. Similar to personal factors, both positive and negative descriptions were assigned to all themes, therefore reverse coding was employed. The reflection notes the relevant code in italics.

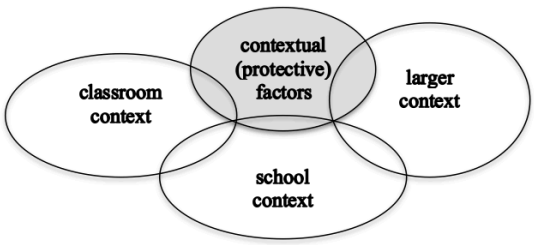


Figure 8: coding tree, overview of themes addressing Research Question 3 about contextual factors that impact on ECTs’ resilience

5.4.2.1 Classroom Context (micro-level)

Some ECTs reflected on how important the interaction was with the class they were teaching (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007), as discussed in 2.1.3. Dutch schools have great difficulty attracting well-qualified teachers and often appoint under-qualified teachers (Schelvis et al., 2014). At the same time pupils can be seen to be increasingly more assertive which gives rise to potentially difficult classroom situations (OECD, 2013, 2016b). Adrian, who is a supply teacher, in his eighth job, and has nine years of experience, still encountered classes that were difficult to manage. Merlin, another long-term ECT, talks about how his informal way of teaching provoked a situation in the class that got completely out of hand whereas he intended to make a joke.

> **Adrian:** I had a couple of students, that were sent to an external rebound place, and I had some students of foreign descent, which I was used to, but not to this extent because they had some cultural and personal issues. I only had 13 students to start with and it cost me more effort to deal with those 13 than it did with 30 the year before (*teacher-pupil relationship*). [Interview 1]

> **Merlin**: I always communicate with my students in quite an informal way. That day I taught mainly girls studying flower arrangements. And as one of them was looking for a socket for her laptop, she was creating a big fuss, and taking up a lot of my teaching time. I said: "Muts er zit er een naast je" ["Silly cow, there is one next to you."] at which point she really, really exploded … and then the class joined in, which infuriated her even more -- Well, I felt, I shouldn't have said anything more or she might have hit me (*teacher-pupil relationship*). [Interview 1]

Florence, who previously discussed how managing pupil behaviour remained problematic to her, has to fit in with the class rules of her supervisor and finds herself trapped in the system.

> **Florence**: The teacher was really tall and he had been in the job for at least 25 years but he didn't mind the cell phones, … and I had to tell them over and over again to put them away and they didn't like that about me. But I saw everything … and that made it harder, because he didn't really pay attention to those kinds of things (*recognition of her status as a teacher and not a trainee*). [Interview 1]

Reflecting on this in her journal, the researcher observed how the three encounters demonstrate how poorly the ECTs deal with discipline, raise issues with non-Dutch pupils, how informal communication from a teacher can escalate into even worse communication and how modern technology is impacting on classrooms. Teacher resilience is thought to be determined by the interplay between personal factors and the external environments in which teachers work (Day & Gu, 2007; Sammons et al., 2007).

In order to develop their resilience, the ECTs required personal attributes discussed in the previous section but also protective contextual factors, such as supportive peers and colleagues.

5.4.2.2 School Context (meso-level)

This theme identifies how school contexts can support but also constrain ECTs, as discussed by Patterson et al. (2004) and Day and Gu (2014). A key factor in understanding any ECTs' critical incidents relating to their resilience is the physical and social context of the school, the facilities, rules, values and personal backgrounds of the pupils. These factors can act as a resource but also as a challenge, as can be deducted from these ECTs' reflections. In this research, more than half of the ECTs reflected it was important to promote a sense of belonging and feeling connected. These reflections were coded with either: *collaboration*; *collegiality; mentors;* or *supportive and democratic leadership*, as referred to in italics. All four quotations below show the importance of contextual resources to an ECT. The long-term ECT Merlin, who felt isolated in his educational context, was prepared to step in, when a colleague failed to manage some classes, but he was never given any credit for this.

> **Merlin**: I only worked at that school for two years, not the normal three years, because the principal decided he wanted to replace me with one of his friends … Before that, I actually was teaching more than a full time job, because one of my colleagues had trouble with some classes, so I offered to give them to me … I never really got any gratitude from the principal for doing that (*collegiality*). [Interview 1]

Another long-term ECT Cheryl discussed how colleagues could work collaboratively to analyse how effective the teachers' discipline is on the pupils within a particular school context. She claimed that teachers must first learn how to maintain classroom discipline before focusing on pupils' academic goals and needs.

> **Cheryl**: We should become a united front as teachers. When we penalise kids the consequences should also incorporate the parents. We often forget them. While the kids do their chores parents phone and complain (*collaboration*). [Interview 2]

ECTs referred to the Management of their schools as being paramount to their sense of belonging and feeling connected with the school. Ralph, who felt betrayed by

Management when a colleague was suspended, explained how Management constantly changing provided him with an unsafe learning environment.

> **Ralph**: This is my fourth year at this school, and I've had three managers and two interims, so I have had five different people. (*unsupportive democratic leadership)* [Interview 1]

Cheryl felt that her authority was taken away, when her class was taken over by Management, as was explained in her vignette (See *Appendix 8.4*). She felt vulnerable in her position even though she was in her seventh year as an EFL trainee teacher.

> **Cheryl**: I think it's because it's a, such a, the human interaction is a hundred per cent, in this career with children. And I feel always critiqued in some way by my Management (*unsupportive democratic leadership*). [Interview 2]

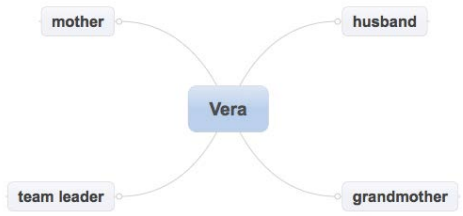
Teaching is a situated activity governed by the norms of practice of a school (Richards, 2013, 2016), therefore ECTs should be involved in learning how to teach in a specific context and how to acquire contextual knowledge that may help to foster their resilience (Johnson et al., 2012; Doney, 2013). This influenced the researcher's thinking about resilience, which will be further critically discussed in Chapter 6.

5.4.2.3 Larger Context (macro-level)

A sense of a larger community emerged several times during the interviews as a theme on its own. This is also identified in the work of Mansfield et al. (2014) discussed in Chapter 2. The regular ECT Vera, who previously explained that she felt at times overwhelmed by multiple demands, does home visits which

> **Vera**: "gives the parents a feeling that we are really involved with what happens at home and sometimes it is very useful, because when you see a pupil who is shabbily dressed and you see they have six cats and a snake at home, well then you know why." (*larger community*) [Interview 1]

She also has a supportive mother, who is a teacher as well, as can be seen in her relational map and the following reflection.

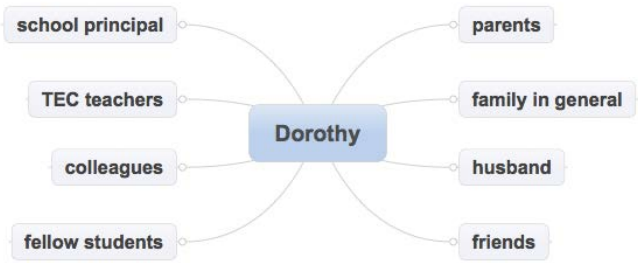


Vera's relational map, interview 1

> **Vera**: My mum helps me realize I made the right decision about becoming a teacher. She also helps me with how I can explain things to parents (*supportive mother*). [Interview 2]

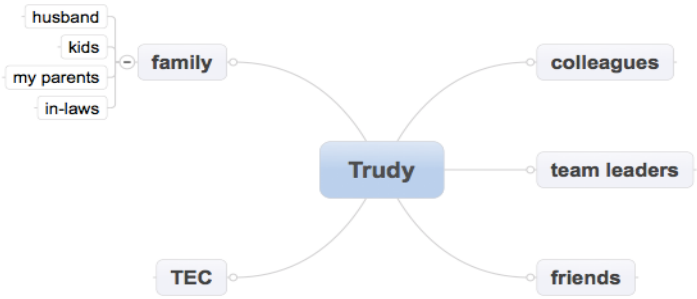
The relational map proved to be a useful research tool, indicating the importance of having a personal and professional network as an ECT. Dorothy's map shows the significance of parents and family in general. In her interview, she explained that her parents had always helped her with her educational career starting with her degree in Italian and now with her B.Ed. in the Netherlands.

> **Dorothy**: "We all four went to university and I come from the south of Italy and my parents wanted me to study and they supported me financially and morally. They are number one. R. (husband) will be number two, then my colleagues and my fellow students" (*supportive parents*). [Interview 1]



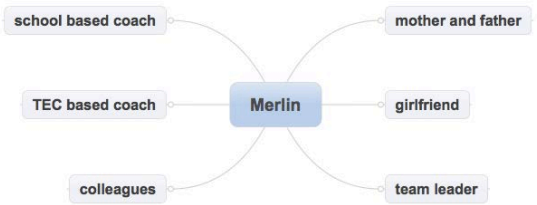
Dorothy's relational map, interview 1

Another example relates to Trudy's case, who was not new to teaching as she had worked previously at international primary schools, for a total of ten years. In her relational map she emphasised the importance of creating good support structures outside school. When she went back to America for Christmas, her parents looked after her children so she could study (*husband, parents and in-laws*).



Trudy's relational map, interview 1

A final example relates to Merlin, a long-term student, who was advised to obtain his degree a soon as possible, after more than nine years of studying at the TEC. He drew the following relational map, highlighting the importance of both his school based mentor and TEC based mentor.



Merlin's relational map, interview 1

> **Merlin**: She [his school based mentor] and I really had a good connection, and at the end, the exit conversation, she said "you have really a lot of talents, but you're staying stuck at the same point, while you don't finish your diploma we're not able to offer you anything, and it also keeps you in this limbo between being a really fully qualified teacher and being a student," which is something I'm really grateful to her, that she actually managed to say that. [Interview 1]

Following Dutch law, Merlin lost his position at this school because, after three one-year contracts, he was told to look for another school. In her journal, the researcher observed that allowing unlimited enrolment at the TEC was an issue for further investigation in Chapter 6.

It can be deduced from this data that the wider context of teaching has a significant impact on the ECTs' resilience, either positively, as was the case with Vera, Dorothy Trudy and Merlin, or negatively, as was the case with Ralph and Cheryl in the previous section.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter the outcome of the data analysis collected from and with the twelve ECTs was presented and briefly discussed in relation to the research questions. Their stories, more precisely the relevant parts of them to the research, can be drawn from this analysis and will form the basis for discussion, in the next chapter. The ECTs related the threats they faced to their resilience, and described how different personal and contextual factors have come into play and contributed to the resilience they have today.

Chapter Six

6. Discussion

This Chapter is intended to interrogate the findings, resulting from the data collected and analysed, in order to address the research questions. Even though this research focused on the individual as the unit of observation, it is suggested that there is no simple individual explanation of resilience, but rather a "situational or interpersonal level of analysis" (Johnson et al., 2016: 18). This entails a discussion of the ECTs' stories about what happened in their workplace environment. The research was underpinned by the notion that ECTs possess valuable insights about how resilience may be developed within an EFL context.

Masten et al.'s (1990) definition of resilience "the process of, capacity for or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (p. 425) (See Chapter 2.1) proved to be useful when addressing the three research questions. The "*outcome of successful adaptation* despite challenging or threatening circumstances" relates to the first research question about teaching experiences, presented on the right in *Figure 1*. The "*process of* … successful adaptation" refers to the second research question on strategies that contribute to resilience outcomes, presented at the centre in *Figure 1*. The "*capacity for* … successful adaptation" relates to the third research question on personal and contextual factors, presented on the left in *Figure 1* (italics are the researcher's). Following Mansfield's framework (2015) as referred to in Chapter 4.1, the themes that addressed the three research questions are also presented in this figure.

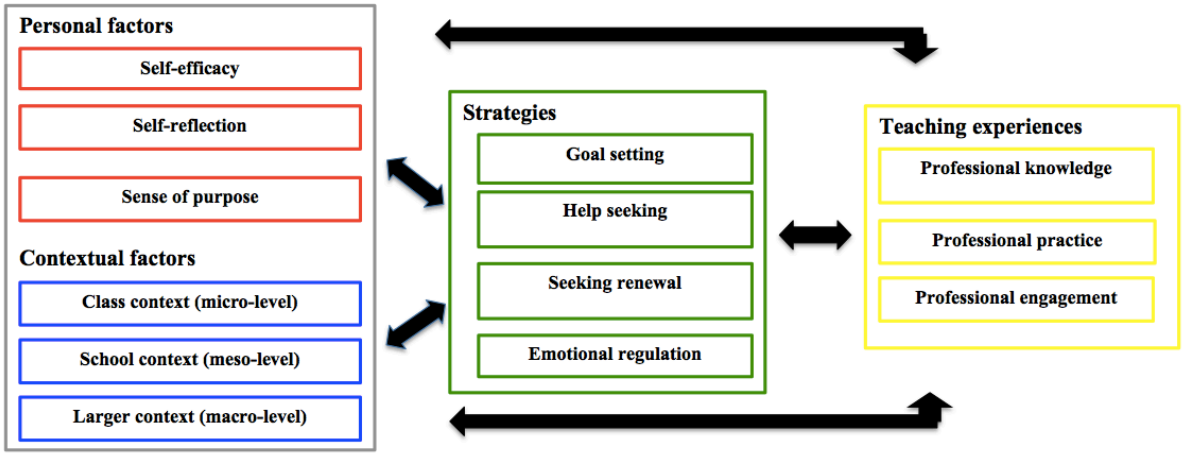


Figure 1: themes addressing the three research questions, following Mansfield (2015)

The discussion of the findings is organised around the three research questions informing this research. An interrogation of the findings will be presented with appropriate caution, by looking across the themes to highlight the major issues. The twelve cases will be further developed and will be situated in their professional context. The cases, organised in three cohorts, will further illustrate the themes' significance. The findings will be critically discussed, including how they add to or challenge what is already known about ECTs' resilience.

6.1 Research Question 1: What kinds of experiences contribute to changes in ECTs' resilience?

The ECTs talked about a great variety in teaching experiences, as presented in Chapter 5.2 and the vignettes in *Appendix 8*. They were often expected to take on the full range of teaching tasks alone such as transitioning from classroom teaching to grading papers, mentoring, disciplining pupils and preparing classes. Frequently, the ECTs were given very little support to cope with all the demands of the new role. In addition, they were not only required to do all the tasks that experienced teachers do, but there was also further job intensification the longer they were based at a particular school. The long-term ECTs, such as Adrian, talked about a persistent and chronic work overload, and Merlin discussed reduced time for relaxation during his weekends. Cheryl felt extra burdened, when she had to manage the exams of the department four times a year on top of her teaching assignments. In spite of the great variety in teaching experiences, three major

issues relating to resilience emerged from the findings referring to the themes of professional knowledge, practice and finally engagement.

The first major issue was that ECTs made a clear distinction between strong content knowledge and general pedagogical skills in their narratives. Miriam in her line drawing activity drew two lines indicating how much she felt these lines needed to be analysed separately (See *Appendix 8.6*). The data collected from Trudy and Linda, presented and discussed in Chapter 5, indicates that strong content knowledge can be seen to be an important contributory factor in the development of resilience. This is not surprising as both have English as their first language. Rachel, also a beginning ECT but not a native speaker of English, claimed that her English skills were better than her pedagogical skills. Analysis of the data indicated that these ECTs believed strong content knowledge was a major factor in their resilience building because they felt confident in their subject matter at the same time they were learning how to teach. The ECTs tried "to adapt to change, recover from change and remain vigorous after changes have occurred" (p. 623) which is equivalent to being resilient, according to Schelvis et al. (2014).

Others, like the beginning ECT Dorothy, originally from Italy, however, said that they needed to work hard to reach the required level of English and to maintain it, which made them feel insecure. When the regular ECT Miriam had graduated from the TEC she said her level of English had dropped considerably, and she felt she needed to work hard to keep it up. This made an impact on her feelings of resilience as she lost some of her confidence regarding content knowledge. The Dutch national guidelines for EFL teachers require the highest level of English (Bologna Working Group, 2005; HBO raad, 2011). For both Dorothy and Miriam it was a real challenge to get to the near native C2 level and they both had to work hard to maintain their command of English, which impacted negatively on their feelings of resilience.

The second major issue that emerged from the findings was the importance the ECTs gave to general pedagogical skills, as opposed to content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, when discussing how they fostered their resilience. These findings are in contrast to those of several researchers, who document that pedagogical content knowledge is a protective factor in the development of teacher resilience (Shulman, 1987; Grossman et al., 2005, 2009; Richards, 2016). Richards contends that acquiring relevant

pedagogical content knowledge together with developing the ability to present subject matter from a learner's perspective are core dimensions of a beginning teacher. Grossman et al. (2005) emphasize the importance of pedagogical content knowledge, which they define as "what it means to understand one's subject matter for the purpose of teaching it to others" (p. 207). Fox et al. (2015) suggest that next to authentic application of pedagogical content knowledge is a focus of teachers' reflections across professional learning.

ECTs, however, need to construct their own knowledge and their existing knowledge and beliefs are situated in particular contexts (Borko, 2004). Interrogation of the data revealed that in their particular contexts, the long-term ECT Ralph, three of the regular ECTs Vera, Miriam, Florence and the beginning ECTs Rachel and Alice discussed how being pedagogically competent impacted on their resilience, as presented and discussed in Chapter 5. In her portfolio, Alice said that modelling another teacher did not always work for her, and subsequently she explained how in-school mentoring had helped her out with her on-going decision-making.

> **Alice**: Mainly male colleagues gave me the advice to be strict, show them who is the boss, and just send them out! I followed this up but of course that did not work for me. Then I went to R. [her mentor]. His advice was paramount for my growth as a teacher: "Be yourself and do it your way". This gave me back my self-confidence and was furthermore supported by my Management and pupils. [Portfolio]

In their portfolios and interviews, the ECTs described how they occasionally lacked good pedagogical skills. On the one hand, the ECTs needed to learn how to deal with disciplining pupils and on the other hand they wanted to get to know their pupils, not just academically but also their personalities and learning styles. Further examples of classroom management issues are presented in the vignettes of Adrian, Vera, Miriam, Linda and Dorothy (*Appendix 8.2, 8.5, 8.6, 8.8 and 8.10*).

The ECTs seemed to develop more of these general pedagogical skills on the job as they gained teaching experience, so they searched for positive adaptation despite adversities. As explained in Chapters 3 and 4, the ECTs were asked to identify and discuss critical incidents and teaching experiences by means of line drawings and therefore *knowledge-in-practice*, that is finding out what works by reflecting on day-to-day contextualised practice, became important (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999). They explained how they

engaged in professional learning and how they tried to find their teaching voice. They also discussed how to create challenging learning environments for their pupils in order to get them focused in class.

The third and final major issue addressing the first research question was the ECTs' wish to belong to a school community, which is one of the seven competences, required within the National Standards for Teachers (Stichting Beroepskwaliteit Leraren, SBL, 2005), even though they are not regarded as fully qualified teachers. At the start of the first interviews, all twelve were still students at the TEC, so therefore unqualified as an EFL teacher but they had all been given temporary contracts. Subsequently, they were on non tenure-track, temporary in nature. The one-year appointment is with the expectation that the B.Ed. will be completed no later than the end of the first academic year. They all knew that after three one-year contracts they are required to look for another school, following Dutch law. The data presented and discussed in Chapter 5 indicates that the long-term ECTs Merlin and Cheryl, and the beginning ECTs Alice and Rachel experienced feelings of isolation within their professional context. Alice and Rachel capture this feeling in these reflections:

> **Alice**: "Teaching would have to be one of the loneliest professions, when you are in a school that offers no support" [Portfolio].
>
> **Rachel**: "I felt snubbed in the staff room and excluded as a newcomer" [Portfolio].

The ECTs' stories included moments in the classroom in which they felt isolated and left to their own devices. Halford (1998) says that teaching is "the profession that eats its young" (p. 33), which can be seen to refer to the beginning ECTs Alice and Rachel who were left to cope alone with the many demands and challenges of beginning teaching. Vera, in her third year of teaching was caught up in a fight between two pupils, and was surprised to find out how much the incident had affected her. Miriam had a pencil case thrown at her, which threw her off balance even after having been a teacher for more than four years. Dorothy was upset when a pupil was aggressive towards her, further discussed in her vignette (*Appendix 8.10*).

Managing feelings of isolation, by working on relationships with colleagues effectively and therefore creating a sense of belonging to a particular professional community, is a

source of support for teachers and contributes towards the development of teacher resilience (Howard & Johnson, 2004; Gu & Day, 2007, 2013; Johnson et al., 2012; Le Cornu, 2013; Mansfield et al., 2014), further discussed in Chapter 2.1.3. The ECTs felt challenged by the various classroom issues and therefore looked for support in their school community, whenever they experienced a low point in their early careers.

In sum, this first research question focused on the teaching experiences and how positive adaptations were often achieved under challenging circumstances. The major teaching experiences that impacted positively on the ECTs' resilience were related to feeling confident in teaching their subject matter of EFL, developing general pedagogical skills, and the wish to belong to a school community even though they were not regarded as fully qualified teachers. The ECTs' stories showed patterns of positive adaptation. However, they needed adversity to discover that they were resilient either in their specific classroom situation or in the larger professional community. Doing well as a teacher did not define the ECTs' resilience, but resilience was inferred when they were faced with more complex teaching tasks, and consequently their resilience was tested.

6.2 Research Question 2: What kinds of strategies contribute to changes in ECTs' resilience?

The second research question that addresses the kinds of strategies, which ECTs suggest when discussing a change in their resilience, refers to the "*process of* … successful adaptation" (Masten et al., 1990). This research looked for an understanding of processes that might explain how positive adaptation is achieved under difficult classroom circumstances (Masten et al., 2012). Significantly, all ECTs discussed wanting to develop a repertoire of strategies, which would help them deal with challenging classroom situations.

The ECTs often do not know which type of secondary school the TEC will place them in during their first year. The ECTs will need some time to develop a wide repertoire of strategies, whereas expert teachers already have several strategies they can draw upon, as discussed in Chapter 2.2. The ECTs needed to master the different lesson plan formats in a particular context ranging from the three lower forms of HAVO (senior general

secondary education), and VWO (pre-university education), to all four forms of VMBO (pre-vocational secondary education), see *Appendix 9*. In contrast to beginning teachers, expert teachers are willing to depart from established procedures and use their own solutions (Hattie, 2009; Richards, 2016). However, by "learning about practice in practice" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005: 401) ECTs may apply what is learned at the TEC and try out different strategies in their classrooms. In this research, the workplace is regarded as an important potential learning situation for ECTs, which impacted on their resilience (Merriam, 2001; Eraut, 2004; Knowles, et al., 2012).

The first major issue that came through strongly in the data was that the TEC did not sufficiently prepare the ECTs to be able to regulate their emotions when teaching. While the TEC offered courses on content knowledge in the area of EFL, the ECTs lacked context specific guidance to address the emotional dimension of their teaching.

> **Alice**: In the first months I felt like juggling lots of balls … you think what do I do next, especially when ten kids yell at you … nobody helped me out on this and this is not something you read about in your textbooks. [Interview 2]

Both in the data and in the literature, teachers' resilience is related to "regulation of emotions and effective interaction in social environments" (Tait, 2008: 72). In line with research (Nieto, 2003; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Gu & Day, 2007; Katkus, 2007), the strategy of creating positive relationships with both pupils and colleagues resulted in the ECTs wanting to remain in the profession:

> "Teaching provides almost daily opportunities to feel good about what you do. Forging relationships with students and other faculty, as well as making an impact on students' lives ranked high with interviewees as the good aspects of being a teacher" (Katkus, 2007: 147).

The strategy of remaining calm when responding to challenging behaviour signifies an effective classroom management style (Jennings & Greenberg, 2008), and has a positive impact on defiant behaviours (Rogers, 2011). Cheryl was one of the ECTs who frequently emphasised the importance of emotional regulation. Her strategy was to focus her attention on what went well which fostered her feeling of resilience, as explained in 5.3.1.

> **Cheryl**: I think the resilience I have is in pinpointing what does not work and what works. I focus on what goes well. Not as fast as I would want to, sometimes I really have to trip and fall flat on my face. [Interview 1]

The ECTs found it hard to respond adequately to incidental behaviour that occurred in their classes. The Netherlands has the lowest index of disciplinary climate among all top-performing countries in PISA. Even in the most socio-economically advantaged schools there is noise and disorder (OECD, 2013, 2016b). Teachers need to wait until pupils are quiet for a long time before they can start their lessons (Huygen, 2016). The data, presented and discussed in Chapter 5, included several examples of ECTs having to find strategies to deal with disruptive pupils. Ralph, Dorothy and Adrian reported critical incidents about cell phones being used during their lessons. The data collected from Florence and Alice (*Appendix 8.7 and 8.9)*, indicates that they needed to preserve better boundaries in their classrooms. Both ECTs needed to identify what they could tolerate and accept and what made them uncomfortable and stressed.

The findings suggest that *emotional regulation* was a main strategy employed by the ECTs in this research. When demonstrating what it meant to be a beginning teacher, the ECTs highlighted some of the emotional aspects of teaching and learning. This finding seems to confirm those of Howard and Johnson (2004), who contend that resilient teachers are patient and competent at forming relationships with children displaying difficult behaviour, as mentioned in section 2.1.2. Furthermore, Day and Gu (2014) state that:

> "Teaching is emotionally demanding work because it involves working with the challenges of pupils – who have different motivations, aptitudes and personal histories of learning, who have not necessarily chosen to learn and who do not always place a high value on the subject or teacher." (p. 34)

Thus, if ECTs want to remain resilient they need to address the emotional dimensions of their work. It is not surprising that the ECTs at times felt vulnerable "because of the emotional investments which many teachers make in their work" (ibid.: 35). Dorothy tried to maintain a sense of calmness in order to respond appropriately to challenging pupil behaviour, as can be seen in the following reflection (further discussed in her vignette, *Appendix 8.10*). Cheryl also used the strategy of sharing positive feelings with her pupils.

> **Dorothy**: … he was very aggressive verbally to me. And I didn't respond, I didn't want to, I just wanted him to get all his negativity out of him … I like to be in a positive environment. [Interview 2]
>
> **Cheryl**: Because when things are going fine, I share that too with my pupils. It creates a positive vibe. [Interview 2]

Dorothy and Cheryl talked specifically about maintaining a positive attitude in the face of challenges. They tried to keep up this strategy with their pupils. Taking up an optimistic attitude has been found to leave a positive impact on teacher resilience (Johnson et al., 2012; Nieto, 2003). Based on the findings of this research, it could be argued that ECTs who often experience an array of positive emotions might be more resilient as they are better able at coping with teaching demands, and better able at thinking of strategies (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Day and Gu (2014) found that teachers with a high capacity for resilience are likely to recover more quickly from a negative experience than teachers with a low capacity for resilience, which indicates that resilience is not static but mutable.

The second major issue relating to strategies was that building resilience appeared to be a developmental process. This view confirms Masten et al.'s (1990) definition of resilience as a *process* through which ECTs may develop the ability to adapt successfully to challenging or threatening circumstances. When discussing and reflecting on what strategies impacted on their resilience, ECTs referred to the possibility of designing their own materials and tailoring lessons to pupils' needs. This contributed to developing a repertoire of different teaching strategies indicating that building resilience is part of a developmental process. The data presented and discussed in Chapter 5 indicates that Alice, Dorothy and Vera, sought to try out new ideas whether in the form of materials or content of instruction. Alice explained how she was always allowed to try out something new as long as it complied with the school policy. Dorothy started a new teaching approach to tailor lessons to pupils' needs and Vera adapted her disciplinary rules, which meant seeking renewal by changing the content of her instructions. These three ECTs reflected that despite experiencing challenges in their early teaching years, they succeeded and fostered their resilient qualities, through the development of these strategies.

Teacher resilience is conceptualised by Bobek (2002) as a "process of development that occurs over time" involving "the ability to adjust to varied situations and increase one's

competence in the face of adverse conditions" (p. 202). Interrogation of the data revealed that the dynamic nature of the ECTs' pedagogy offered many opportunities to enhance their resilience. The ECTs improvised during their lessons. In their portfolios they talked about how they moved back and forth between book-based input and teacher-initiated input and therefore "articulated their own pedagogical principles on which the practices were based" (Breen et al., 2001: 495).

Alice demonstrated she was flexible, as she could change her opinion about shadowing a colleague. In the portfolio extract in 6.1 presented above, Alice states: "I followed this up but of course that did not work for me". In that instance shadowing her colleague had not served its purpose. In the reflection below, however, she explains how she becomes more aware of what modelling and co-planning could offer. As there were at least 6 months in between the portfolio entry and the interview this indicates the developmental process of resilience.

> **Alice**: she [a colleague from the German department] really helped me out. She let me visit her classes, showed me some lessons, how to do certain things. And what my other colleagues in English have done is what she did for me. I'm very thankful to her for showing me little tricks. [Interview 1]

Trudy explains how she needs to act as the change agent in her department.

> **Trudy**: I'm quite young in the department where I work. So a lot of the teachers have done their way so many years, it's hard for them to change. [Interview 1]

In her portfolio Dorothy stated that she did not want to "deliver her courses in a predetermined way" (Dorothy, portfolio). The ECTs' reflections seem to confirm that their strategies are based on learnable skills, contributing to a view of resilience as developmental (Day & Gu, 2014; Mansfield et al., 2014).

Whenever the ECTs employed a particular strategy this could impact their resilience favourably or negatively, as was the case with Alice, Trudy and Dorothy. It shows as with any developmental process that change can be positive or negative. To be able to deal with the demanding nature of teaching, the ECTs also turned to the strategy of setting performance goals. The findings indicate that the ECTs needed to develop performance goals that help them thrive professionally despite challenging moments and

therefore make them more resilient. In their portfolios they explained how they learn from setbacks.

> **Alice**: To regain control over this class, I decided to plan more ahead so I know how to engage them better [Portfolio]
>
> **Adrian**: I try not to feel discouraged too long. I might still feel disappointed but I quickly move on to "What do I do next?" [Portfolio]
>
> **Dorothy**: I find it very hard to think on my feet because I am still new to EFL teaching. Sometimes it helps to digress to answer a particular question in class. Suddenly, they all seem to pay attention again. [Portfolio]

Adrian and Trudy also talked about shifting their performance goal from being a solo planner to being a collaborator. They felt that in order to grow they had to be receptive to ideas of co-teachers and open to constructive criticism. Others such as Dorothy, Alice and Merlin talked about "inviting a second pair of eyes" to notice things that they themselves did not see. Both Vera and Linda proposed that they occasionally set the goal to organise mentor talks so that they could see the full range of possibilities in their lessons. By means of setting the goal of modelling lessons, co-planning, and co-teaching classes the ECTs demanded a step-by-step guidance from their mentors, which helped them further in their resilience development.

In sum, when analysing the strategies that contributed to changes in the ECTs' resilience two issues surfaced. The first one was the significance of the ECTs regulating their emotions and how this was a resource or a challenge to them. The ECTs' resilience changed positively or negatively depending on how well they could deal with the profoundly emotional experience of teaching and whether they received any support from their surroundings. By proactively teaching a course on resilience strategies at the TECs, ECTs would be better prepared to respond to challenging behaviour. The second issue dealt with how resilience appeared to be part of a developmental process. Resilience is not a static state as the ECTs showed fluctuations in their resilience, often within the six to nine months' interval between the two interviews and their portfolio entries.

6.3 Research Question 3: What personal and contextual factors contribute to changes in ECTs' resilience?

The third and final question focuses on personal and contextual factors. Masten et al. (1990) warn that resilience should not be seen as an innate or fixed personality trait, which some people might have and others lack to respond adequately to adversity. In their recent research Masten and Tellegen's (2012) definition of resilience in an American context still pivots around the concept of *capacity*. They fine-tune the concept of resilience by defining it as "the capacity of a dynamic system to withstand or recover from significant threats to its stability, viability or development" (p. 348). This research employs Masten et al.'s 1990 definition of resilience because it also includes the *process* of and *outcome* of successful adaptation. It was interesting to investigate whether the ECTs' resilience in a Dutch school context could be seen as a capacity that can change or as an innate and fixed attribute.

6.3.1 Personal Factors

The first major issue relating to personal factors was that self-efficacy emerged as a dynamic concept in relation to the development of resilience. As addressed in Chapter 2 self-efficacy is taken to mean "a high level belief in one's own abilities" (Burke & Stets, 2009: 117). Rutter (1990) describes self-efficacy as a major predictor of resilience. According to Hoy and Spero (2005) the teachers' sense of efficacy is their "judgement about their abilities to promote students' learning" (p. 343). In his interview the long-term ECT Ralph showed at first a low level of self-efficacy, but felt better when he received good references, therefore his self-efficacy appeared to change over time.

> **Ralph**: But afterwards I thought well do I really want to remain a teacher? I love going into work … They offered me that [a job], after an interview, that was nice and they really saw my value as a teacher. I got some great references; I'm well chuffed with everything, so things went a little better. [Interview 1]

Adrian emphasised that he needed to work on his critical sense all the time. It may be inferred that self-efficacy is not considered to be an innate attribute but it can be learnt and developed. Adrian underscores the developmental aspect of self-efficacy.

> **Adrian**: If you like yourself a little too much you lose a critical sense of your own work, and I think it is important to keep on adjusting yourself if you want to carry on growing and evolving as a teacher. [Interview 2]

Cheryl's sense of self-efficacy was taken away when her Team leader took over her class.

> **Cheryl**: … suddenly you have 28 kids looking at you as the leader whereas before you were just the sidekick. So that's why I was so taken aback when she [Cheryl's manager] walked in. [Interview 1]

In contrast to the long-term ECTs Ralph, Adrian and Cheryl who had all been teaching for more than seven years, Rachel was a first year trainee who still needs to further develop self-efficacy, another indication that it is a dynamic concept that influences how you feel, think and behave.

> **Rachel**: I have struggled with confidence issues forever and I'm doing loads better now. I'm a lot more confident than I used to be, but still I tend to feel insecure when I think someone has a negative opinion about me. I think that is really going to hit home when I start teaching for real as I, if I ever want to teach close to my heart, I'd be practising a different way of teaching as that I see now. I think that that could yield some criticism. [Interview 1]

The findings above support those of Bandura (2000) who suggests that self-efficacy is a vital personal resource and says:

> "When faced with obstacles, setbacks and failures, those who doubt their capabilities slacken their efforts, give up, or settle for mediocre solutions. Those who have a strong belief in their capabilities redouble their effort to master the challenges" (p.120).

He argues that self-efficacy may affect individuals' self-motivation and life trajectories. As Rachel is still at the start of her career, she might be able to "redouble her effort to master her challenges" with mentor support, which may result in her feeling less vulnerable and so more resilient. She believes in her own abilities but still needs to find her individual teacher's voice. Both Cheryl and Adrian, who had many more years of teaching experience, preferred to handle difficulties on their own and only referred to Management when necessary. They both believed that they could solve possible conflicts with pupils themselves, which seems to indicate that they have a high sense of self-efficacy (Goddard et al., 2004). In the reflections above Ralph, Adrian, Cheryl and Rachel showed how their development of self-efficacy consistently interacted with their surroundings and was far from stable. Self-efficacy is "a dynamic, developmental process

– the key characteristic of resilience" (Gu & Day, 2007: 1312). In line with Masten and Tellegen's (2012) findings in an American context, the stories of these Dutch ECTs imply that self-efficacy is dynamic and plays an important role in their resilience process.

The second major issue emerging from the findings addressing personal factors was that some ECTs showed a high sense of agency, which seemed to foster their resilience. Day et al. (2007) in their VITAE professional life phase trajectory, discussed in Chapter 2, state that "a strong sense of personal and professional agency … contributed to their [teachers'] commitment and resilience" (p.106). Rachel showed that she found it hard to adapt to the disciplinary code set by her school and therefore she felt stressed, which had a negative impact on her resilience. The regular ECT Florence, however, felt more in control and experienced less adversity at her school. She had a developing sense of agency and explained that you have to be flexible as a teacher (further discussed in her vignette, *Appendix 8.7*). The long-term ECT Adrian, who works as a supply teacher said he was ready to move on to the next job. He showed commitment and sounded purposeful and motivated about the next job. Both Florence and Adrian showed their capacity to act, the definition of teacher agency adhered to in this research (Howard & Johnson, 2004).

In their portfolios, the ECTs discussed issues around "providing scaffolds in order for pupils to feel successful" [Florence], "trying to model the use of a particular skill" [Miriam] and "providing independent practice of a skill, which pupils have just learned" [Vera]. In these examples agency is achieved in the present and it results from the interplay of individual efforts by the ECTs, available classroom resources and contextual factors (Biesta & Tedder, 2007).

Agency concerns the ways that people exercise some level of control over their own lives (Bandura, 1997). The ECTs Vera and Miriam, both belonging to the regular cohort described themselves as acting subjects and decision makers. They explained that they could make decisions at any point in time, and they wanted to have conscious definite goals in mind, whenever a difficult moment presented itself. Vera explained how resilience can be affected by life experience:

> **Vera**: The level of resilience also depends on your health, personality, motivation and mind set…. From my own experience I can say that once you focus on your goals you can achieve anything [Portfolio].
>
> **Miriam**: I always have a choice in how I cope with the situation … This is what resilience is to me, turning challenging situations into teachable moments. [Interview 2]

The regular and long-term ECTs appeared to exercise some level of control over their own professional lives, they seem to have "an active agential teacher self" (Day et al., 2007: 103), which had a positive impact on their resilience.

In sum, personal factors sustained ECTs when difficulties arose and therefore positively impacted their resilience. Both Linda and Trudy showed a developing self-efficacy and Rachel a beginning sense of agency, which is in line with the VITAE research conducted by Day et al. (2006) on the three initial professional life phases relevant to this research. The long-term and regular ECTs sounded more purposeful in their interviews and portfolios than the beginning ECTs. Self-efficacy appeared to be a dynamic concept and a sense of agency impacted positively on the ECTs' resilience. Even though these individual traits changed depending on the classroom challenges within the short two-year track of this research, they are considered to be significant protective personal factors that foster the ECTs' resilience.

6.3.2 Contextual Factors

In Chapter 5 contextual factors were addressed at a micro, meso and macro level. When critically discussing the data the significance of the Dutch context comes through strongly at all three levels. This seems to confirm that resilience is a "contextually embedded construct" (Beltman et al., 2015: 2) meaning that characteristics of individual ECTs and their personal and professional contexts interact over time. This section discusses how some ECTs' reflections that were coded as protective contextual factors turned out to have a negative effect on the ECTs' capacity for successful adaptation.

At the micro level some ECTs consider the informal classroom atmosphere to be important for building trust between teachers and pupils. However, behaving informally

gave rise to some disruptive classroom incidents. The long-term ECT Merlin explained that he might be too lenient when dealing with his pupils.

> **Merlin**: Well, the thing that I've learned from it is that I sometimes get a bit overconfident and a bit too informal with students… I know students appreciate that. [Interview 1]

Later on he had a classroom incident, which got out of hand, as explained in section 5.4:

> **Merlin:** "Muts er zit er een naast je" ["Silly cow, there is one next to you."] at which point she really, really exploded … and then the class joined in, which infuriated her even more. [Interview 1]

Florence and Dorothy used images of *ice cracking* and *melting* in their portfolios when they described particular incidents where pupils became more responsive towards them. At the same time, they also needed to set their boundaries when necessary, and experienced aggressive behaviour when they tried to discipline pupils. Rachel encountered stress due to her wanting to set her own disciplinary rules, because she was uncertain about how to deal with unruly behaviour. Adrian wanted to understand and consider his pupils' background:

> **Adrian:** I'm informal in almost everything … you get to discussions like yes McDonald's is not halal, but do you eat hamburgers? Some of them say yes, yes, I do and that Muslim kid says no, you can't do that … [Interview 2]

Some ECTs had their own way of building relationships, which was often informal. Trying to understand and consider pupils' backgrounds helped these ECTs decide how to respond to challenging behaviour accordingly. On the one hand the pattern that emerged from the data was the importance of being caring and respectful, on the other hand setting boundaries when necessary was a real challenge, which impacted on their resilience negatively. An informal classroom atmosphere caused adversities, which constrained the ECTs' resilience.

At the meso level induction programmes provided by schools are supposed to ease the transition from the TEC to the classroom. In practice, the lack of supervision received from the TEC based and school based mentors made ECTs feel vulnerable. They were often left to *"sink or swim"* (Howe, 2006: 289). Cheryl explained that because she

seemed to be a competent teacher her school based mentor decided not to observe her classes as:

> **Cheryl**: "I only hear good things about your classes … I have to do my own things as well … I trust that you will ask me things if necessary." [Interview 1]

It seems important to provide a constructive induction programme for the ECTs assisting them on their transition from the TEC to a specific education track (Bubb et al., 2002). At present neither the TEC nor the school induction programmes seem to prepare the ECTs well enough for the variety of Dutch education tracks: VMBO, the lower forms of HAVO and VWO (See also *Appendix 9*). As discussed above, the ECTs may end up teaching in one of these three different programmes. When attending a comprehensive education system, pupils of different ability levels attend the same school and follow the same educational programmes for five to six years. In the Netherlands, however, pupils are streamed at a young age, at some of the ECTs' schools as early as lower secondary level. This means that the ECTs needed strong differentiated teaching skills because teachers can never afford to assume that streaming has ensured homogeneous classrooms (OECD, 2016b). ECTs do not have the skills as yet to systematically assess pupils and differentiate their teaching to individual learning (Inspectorate of Education, 2016). It seemed that the ECTs struggled with trying to find appropriate teaching materials for their classes and how to differentiate between their pupils. This meant that they at times did not create challenging learning environments, and therefore reported difficulties with their classroom management in their portfolios. In 2015, even qualified teachers reported that they were unprepared to systematically assess pupils and differentiate their teaching (Nederlands Vlaamse accreditatie organisatie, NVAO, Dutch Flemish Accreditation Board, 2015).

Next to the school-based induction programmes mentoring is the dominant form of teacher induction in the Netherlands (Helms-Lorenz et al., 2013). However, ECTs with difficult mentor relationships felt obliged to find their own adopted mentors, as emerged from listening to their stories and analysing their relational maps (See section 5.4 and vignettes in *Appendix 8*). Cheryl connected with colleagues from the French department and Vera connected with her team leader and in some cases the ECTs found guidance outside the school campus. Three ECTs approached their mothers who were either teachers or behavioural specialists (See vignettes in *Appendix 8.4, 8.5 and 8.7*). From the

moment they joined the school, the ECTs tried to integrate into the school's context with or without success. If they were left to their own devices the ECTs organised their own support network. Positive recognition from colleagues and team leaders seemed to be an important contextual factor impacting on ECTs' resilience (Johnson et al., 2012; Day & Gu, 2014).

The data addressing this third research question seems to be the most interesting when discussing a possible induction trajectory for ECTs, increasing teaching effectiveness and further implications for teacher education (Zwart, 2007; Hobson et al., 2009; Stanulis et al., 2014). In their portfolios it was very often the school-based mentor who met the ECT during a one-to-one session. The TEC-based mentor, however, used the group nature of mentoring, the one to many model, where one mentor saw many mentees often only twice in a ten-week period. This automatically meant that the ECTs explained they had a different rapport with the school-based mentor, frequently resulting in a close and friendly relationship, which made it easy for the ECTs to broach a topic with them.

In their portfolios the ECTs explained what they meant by mentoring. For them it was synonymous with counselling, instructing, guiding, motivating, encouraging or supporting them as ECTs. Mentoring seemed equivalent to building relationships face-to-face in professional learning contexts. Florence and Vera mentioned that they had been helped the most by colleagues more experienced than themselves, and not by Management, TEC based mentors nor the books they had read.

> **Vera**: Without my mentor I would have been completely lost. [Portfolio]
> **Florence**: My mentor was very much my guide on the side. [Portfolio]

Senior (2006) states that "mentors often seem to work best when it is done informally: when a generous-minded experienced teacher is prepared to devote time helping a novice teacher on a voluntary basis" (p. 64). According to Linda an effective mentor should be a good listener, willing to share information, have a good sense of humour and most importantly be encouraging and empathetic [Portfolio]. For the ECTs, mentoring positively impacted their developing teaching competences, played a major role in their socialisation process, and provided emotional and psychological support. This will be further critically discussed in Chapter 7.

At the macro level the Dutch policy of allowing unlimited enrolment was supposed to help students to study at their own pace. After more than eight years studying at the TEC, Ralph, Merlin and Adrian still need to finish their degree. Ralph, Merlin and Adrian started as full-time students, accepted almost full-time jobs and then enrolled in the part-time TEC. For the past four years the only obstacle for them to become fully qualified teachers has been submitting a final assignment, the research component of the TEC course. This situation poses a major challenge to their resilience. In an E-mail Adrian states:

> Since the beginning of this school year I have felt detached from the TEC. I no longer have to follow courses and have very little contact with teachers and my fellow students. I have a job as an English teacher at a high school in X (name of city) and I commit most of my time and energy to what I do there. The reason I'm writing this email is to request a meeting to help me get my focus back on what I need to do to finish the requirements so I can graduate this school year. [E-mail]

The TEC should be aware of its responsibility in maintaining this challenge. The recent OECD report (2016b) on Dutch education states: "The research component of teacher training programmes may need strengthening" (p. 99). As presented and discussed in Chapter 5, Merlin was advised to obtain his degree as soon as possible. In fact the TEC seems to be too lenient with these students as the college allows unlimited enrolment. The TEC does not offer any specific coaching sessions to students who struggle with carrying out research independently and do not see the necessity of taking this course.

> **Adrian**: I cannot see how doing research will help me become a better EFL teacher. [Interview1]

Ralph confessed that "he felt physically ill" (Ralph's words) when cycling to the TEC indicating the difficulty he had with finishing his final assignment.

> **Ralph**: I have so much on my plate at the moment, which feels very overwhelming. I wish I could set strict deadlines to set myself targets. [Interview 1]

The course requirement of undertaking research follows the Dublin Descriptors (European Consortium for Accreditation ECA, 2005) stating that Bachelor students:

> " … have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with Bachelor's level, and that

> provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context."

All three ECTs explained that they could not understand the importance of writing a reflexive report about their experimenting and innovating in the classroom. So even though all three have been successful EFL teachers for quite some time their biggest challenge to overcome is obtaining the B.Ed. qualification. In their case it is not the secondary school context that constitutes the biggest threat but learning to prioritize effectively what they need to do for their course requirements and focus on the last assignment set by the TEC.

In sum, this section addressed contextual factors that seemed at first to impact the ECTs' resilience positively but in fact had a negative influence. The contextually specific factors to the Dutch situation consisted of: 1) an informal classroom atmosphere causing challenging classroom circumstances; 2) institutionalised induction programmes and mentor support that did not sufficiently prepare the ECTs for the variety of Dutch educational tracks; 3) the enrolment policy of the TEC posed no restrictions on the maximum years of registration for a B.Ed. and made it possible for ECTs to accept an almost full-time teaching job without a degree.

In November 2016, the Dutch government announced two new policies. From September 2017 onwards all students who have been registered for more than seven years will be disqualified (Meent van der, 2015; internal documents TEC, 2016). This means that the long-term ECTs will lose all their credit points and will have to start again. Also from September 2017 newly enrolled B.Ed. students will be offered a specialised stream preparatory to either Algemeen Voorbereidend Onderwijs (AVO, Secondary general education: VMBO, HAVO or VWO) or Middelbaar Beroeps Onderwijs (MBO, Secondary vocational education, Dutch school types) (Onderwijsraad, Dutch Education Council, 2011). This changing context will offer new challenges to all part-time B.Ed. students.

6.4 Concluding Remarks

The researcher was able to build the stories of resilience together with the ECTs by first discussing their teaching experiences, followed by the strategies they employed, and their personal and contextual factors. By eliciting critical incidents, the researcher enabled the ECTs to discuss otherwise unremarkable aspects of their teaching practice. The line drawings, relational maps and the portfolios were important tools for reflection and critique of the teaching experiences both for the ECTs and the researcher. This critical incidents approach facilitated the ECTs' understanding of their resilience development. It allowed for authentic and contextualised reflections of how the ECTs fostered their resilience. This finding will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

The research had a central focus on positive development despite challenging circumstances. One of the objectives was to have a transformative effect on teacher practice by addressing problems in ECTs' professional learning, away from deficit-oriented models towards an approach that focused on ECTs' strengths and strategies. The dimensions of ECTs' resilience were determined by the interplay between personal factors that is self-efficacy and agency, and contextual factors. This meant that although self-efficacy and agency were seen to be individual traits, they were also mediated by contextual factors such as collegiality, mentoring and support from family and friends.

Based on the findings of this research, it seems that resilience begets resilience, in other words effective engagement with professional teaching tasks builds the capacity in ECTs that fosters resilience. Walsh (2002) defined resilience as a capacity to bounce forward, which promotes on-going professional learning and has a restorative function. By encouraging ECTs to learn, discover, understand and solve problems on their own by means of experimenting and by trial and error in their specific contexts, they will foster their resilience.

This research suggests an adjustment of Masten et al.'s (1990) definition of resilience. Resilience is taken to mean the *outcome of*, *process of* and *capacity for* successful adaptation not *"despite"* but *"thanks to"* challenging or threatening circumstances (changes indicated in researcher's italics). The elements of Masten et al.'s definition are put in a slightly different order as the research questions first addressed the experiences

(*outcome*), secondly the strategies (*process*), and next the personal factors and contextual factors (*capacities*). This change seemed appropriate as the stories of resilience were built by means of the critical incidents approach, that is starting off with the context bound outcome of the ECTs' adaptation. Furthermore, the ECTs reflected on successful adaptation when adversity was present, so *thanks to* challenging circumstances their everyday resilience was further developed. Building resilience required exposure to significant threats such as the *complex and unpredictable nature of teaching*, *challenging pupil behaviour*, and *feeling isolated*.

By exploring the complex relationship between experiences, strategies and factors impacting on ECTs' resilience, there seemed to be a certain overlap between the research questions. Some of the strategies grew out of the teaching experiences. When reflecting on *the freedom to try out new teaching ideas* the ECTs spoke about the strategy of *seeking renewal* and also sometimes *goal setting*. The ECTs discussed critical incidents referring to strategies so when coding the reflections in ATLAS.ti there were segments in the data that overlapped and smaller data segments embedded within larger ones. In applied thematic analysis, the researcher decides how much of the text is critical to the meaning of the theme and this guides the choice of segment boundaries (Guest et al., 2012). Additionally, some of the personal and contextual factors impacted on the experiences and the development of the strategies. There were many examples of how the contextual factor *collegiality* fostered the teaching experience coded as *positive supportive colleagues or administration* and the strategy *help seeking*. It seems that the overlap between the research questions occurred because they were all three based on Masten et al.'s (op. cit.) definition of resilience. Conceptualising resilience as the outcome of, process of, and capacity for successful adaptation allowed for a certain overlap between the codes addressing the three research questions.

Chapter Seven

7. Conclusions

This chapter discusses the potential contributions to educational practice and limitations of this research. The strengths and weaknesses of the qualitative methodology employed will be discussed and how it could be improved and expanded. This is followed by the suggestions for practice and future research.

7.1 Contributions to Educational Practice

This research has explored the perceptions of twelve ECTs concerning resilience in the context of urban secondary schools in the south of the Netherlands. A range of data was collected based on teaching portfolios and semi-structured interviews, including line drawings and relational maps. The data collection, analysis and discussion were organised into twelve cases. Subsequently, a collection of experiences, strategies and factors were analysed to reveal the stories of resilience. This research tried to illuminate the processes that explain how positive adaptation was achieved under difficult circumstances, resulting in the ECTs' development of resilience.

Interrogation of the data suggested the significance of the specific Dutch contextual factors. Even though the TEC offers a solid theoretical background and four periods of supervised teaching, there is still a gap to bridge between theory and practice. The findings suggest that the TEC and secondary schools need to work together to facilitate induction trajectories. The TEC could offer more practice-based courses, which would foster the ECTs' resilience.

The ECTs' stories highlighted the importance of the "situatedness of all teaching" (Tripp, 2012: 71), meaning the classroom action in concrete school contexts. The extent to which the ECTs felt they responded in resilient ways was influenced by the context in which they taught. Creating an induction trajectory with a solid mentoring programme, equally available to all ECTs, would help them with their socialisation process. Schools could assign more experienced or veteran teachers to serve as mentors for new teachers by

setting up a “buddy programme.” Mentors could introduce them to the social and academic life of a school. In this way ECTs should be sufficiently prepared for the variety of Dutch educational tracks. Rather than just rely on one person, however, it is also important for the ECTs to create their personal network of support and guidance. The ECTs turned to adopted mentors, friends and relatives for help when they tried to deal with the multi-faceted responsibilities and challenges of teaching.

The findings of this research show that resilience begets resilience. Resilience was inferred when the ECTs were challenged by adversity. The ECTs’ career paths did not seem to be linear but they went through ups and downs. They had moments of anticipation, survival, disillusionment and reassessment (Moir, 1990), which they indicated by means of their bumpy line drawings. The changes in their resilience could either be labelled as positive or negative, and occasionally the situation remained stable. However, despite such differing critical incidents in their stories, they all drew a continuous line. In the light of the complex and dynamic nature of resilience, an uninterrupted line suggests that resilience develops and changes over time. Rather than considering resilience as a fixed quality that could be measured at a particular point in time, the story line drawing indicated that it was “an on-going process occurring as a result of interactions in particular contexts” (Mansfield, 2016b: 227).

The main contribution of this research to the researcher’s professional practice is that the critical incidents approach appeared to be an excellent methodology to facilitate the ECTs’ reflections on their classroom experiences. This research shows that the construction of relational maps and line drawings has the potential to engage ECTs in lively discussions and to contribute to reflexive thinking. This approach could be used as a teaching methodology at the TEC, because it was a powerful means for encouraging contextualised reflections and building stories of resilience together with the researcher. The ECTs’ reflections shaped and restructured the stories about their teaching, which in future courses could be further analysed together with their mentors and included in their teaching portfolios. The critical incidents could also be used in the ECTs’ Action Research Report to align their classroom practice more closely with the way they come to view their teaching.

The findings of this research underline the necessity of exploring and understanding better the perceptions of ECTs in order to provide some guidelines for induction programmes. Seeking the views of trainee teachers and, as in this case, beginning professionals seems to be a relatively recent trend in the Netherlands. The findings are by no means conclusive and certainly not prescriptive. The multiple lenses the ECTs brought to bear on what made them resilient were analysed and this led to some understanding of how they may be supported in their transition to become a fully-fledged teacher.

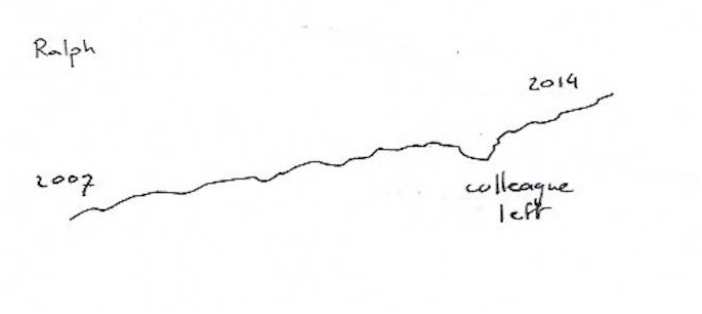
7.2 The Research Process

The research set out to include a developmental aspect of the twelve ECTs as there are approximately nine months in between the two interviews and three different cohorts were invited to participate. Even though the time span between the two interviews was rather short, the ECTs came up with very different stories as they had often moved on to other tasks such as mentoring (Linda) or even different school contexts (Trudy and Adrian). The two interviews together with the line drawings and relational maps, allowed for a discussion of individual fluctuations, in line with Day et al.'s (2007) life phases research discussed in Chapter 2.

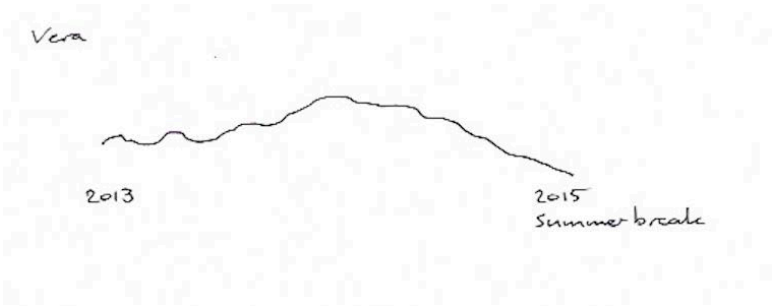
The portfolios were seen as a record of the ECTs' development as an EFL teacher, that is "an evolving text for continuous study and elaboration" (Bullough, 1993: 385). Often, however, it echoed whatever the TEC based mentor said. It came across as unfocused writing and at times superficial. Moreover, the four long term ECTs had all lost their portfolios, implying that the document was no longer used for continuous study. Thus, the TEC needs to search for other means of encouraging ECTs to think and explore their development as teachers. As stated earlier, the critical incidents approach has been suggested as a teaching methodology for trainee teachers to discuss their development and use it as a tool to get insight into improving their teaching. In this way the ECTs could set up a practical agenda for their portfolios, which would enable them to work on their individual concerns.

The line drawings and the relational maps proved to be more helpful research tools because they triggered the ECTs' ability to turn inward and analyse their thinking about teaching and themselves as teachers. The line drawings together with the interviews

provided interesting data about specific moments of self-doubt and personal crisis in the ECTs' lives. As indicated by the line drawings below, Ralph experienced a moment of disillusionment when his colleague was suspended, without any formal explanation from his Management. Vera's line also showed a decline because her father died, after having been hospitalised for quite a while just before the summer break.



Ralph's line drawing, interview 1



Vera's line drawing, interview 2

The capacity to be resilient in mind and action was likely to fluctuate according to pupil behaviour often together with personal and workplace challenges.

This research looked intensely at an individual ECT. It provided unique examples of twelve ECTs "in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles" (Cohen et al., 2011: 289). The ECTs' perceptions stand central and the cases were used as a device to organise the data. The ECTs were not seen as a representative of a type. Shulman (1996, in Darling-Hammond et al., 2005) argues that this sort of case study approach could be important in that it allows students to connect theory with practice:

> "Principles are powerful but cases are memorable. Only in the continued interaction between principles and cases can practitioners and their mentors avoid the inherent limitations of theory-without-practice or the equally serious restrictions of vivid practice without the mirror of principle." (p. 201)

Exploring cases may motivate students' learning and may serve as instruction material at TECs, which will be further explained below.

The researcher's journal appeared to be a useful means for considering the research process in retrospect. Writing critical reflections down on paper and in ATLAS.ti memos gave the researcher the opportunity to think through everything. It encouraged self-reflexivity and enabled the researcher to focus on the process and obtain a grounded understanding of the resilience process.

This research did not focus on the discovery of a universal, generalizable truth, nor did it typically look for cause-effect relationships; instead, emphasis was placed on exploration and description of resilience. The twelve cases contributed "detail, richness and completeness and variance" (Flyvbjerg, 2011: 312) to the discussion about resilience. The research also attempted to focus on developmental factors, which meant that the ECTs evolved in time. By organising the data using cases, a series of concrete events that occurred in a particular school context at a particular time could be analysed. The actual moment when the two interviews were conducted seemed important, as that was the particular time frame of the story told by the ECTs. These were often not the best possible professional moments in the academic year. The snapshots of resilience were taken whenever it was most convenient to meet up for both parties. In Ralph's case this was just after the Christmas holidays, a festive time of year and in Vera's case just before the summer holiday, which is usually a stressful time at school (see line drawings above).

There was an attempt to learn enough about the ECTs to describe their specific case in sufficient details so that readers could "experience these happenings vicariously and draw their own conclusions" (Stake, 2008: 129). At times it seemed difficult to map the trajectories of the ECTs, as they all had such different biographies and different interpretations of what resilience meant to them, as presented in the vignettes (See *Appendix 8*). In practice research is "messy and heterogeneous" (Law, 2003: 3).

Similarly, Ellingson (2013) states that qualitative social scientists often rely on "the subjective, messy, non-generalizable work of the navel-gazers" (pp. 414 - 415).

During the final member checks, the ECTs were asked whether the data was interpreted in a manner that was congruent with their experiences. Eight ECTs responded, five made textual corrections. Three ECTs sent E-mails explaining what their resilience consisted of in their present teaching situation, highlighting the finding that resilience is a learnable skill that will evolve in time.

> **Trudy**: Talking about resilience made me realize how important my relationships with my colleagues are. If there are days that I need a listening ear, or some advice on any school or classroom issues, I become more resilient when I may fall back on my colleagues. [E-mail]

7.3 Limitations of this Research

The research contributed to important findings about teacher resilience in a specific Dutch context, however, the results should not be considered without taking into account some limitations.

By drawing three cohorts from the total population of part-time B.Ed. students this research bears some characteristics of a longitudinal study in that the development over the three cohorts could be analysed. At the same time, it is acknowledged that it does not have the same weight as a longitudinal study on the same cohort over time. This research caught two moments in time in the academic year of the ECT, which highlights the importance of the contextualised experiences of each case. The reflections were largely retrospective, which meant that the researcher relied on the memory of the ECTs. The further back their memory had to reach, the greater the danger of distortion. According to Ruspini (2002, in Cohen et al., 2011), memory is affected by the time that has elapsed since the experience took place, by the significance of the experience and by the interference effect of other memories of a similar event. The ECTs looked at past events through the lens of hindsight and subsequent events, rather than what those experiences meant at the time.

It is acknowledged that the ECTs' stories underwent a number of reconstructions in the process of data collection and analysis. Nelson (2011) proposes that "narrative forms and methodologies are able to highlight not only the said but also the unsaid, not only the known but also the unknown" (p. 475). Subsequently, for this research there are still stories that remain untold and other plausible interpretations of the ECTs' stories exist. The research was conducted by the same principal researcher (actor), through the same time frame 2014-2015 (temporality) and enacted within the same provinces of the Netherlands (place) (Craig, 2013). As noted earlier, a story was seen to be "a series of experiences, events, choices and actions over time" (Kelchtermans, 2008: 27). Following Craig, the ECTs revealed critical incidents that were set in a specific school context and, together with the researcher, the stories of resilience were built. The ECTs positioned themselves by making explicit that they belonged to a particular place in time, that is two particular academic years; and a specific community, urban schools in the south of the Netherlands. The interviews were mostly situated in the TEC at a specific time of the academic year and took place face to face. Had these variables been different, then other stories might have been told.

In this research, all ECTs worked in urban schools in the south of the Netherlands. A comparative research that includes schools from different socioeconomic background may provide further findings on ECTs' resilience. Research about processes that might explain how positive adaptation was achieved under difficult circumstances, in different socioeconomic contexts, may lead to a further understanding of how resilience may be inferred. It should be a major concern in today's society to understand how resilience may be developed, as teachers increasingly seem to be faced with different educational contexts.

7.4 Suggestions for Practice

This research provides snapshots of the ECTs' reflections on resilience and how they conceptualized it as it was constrained in both time and place. It was possible to discuss particular critical incidents and the ECTs were able to reflect on specific classroom contexts. As emerged from the data, the ECTs started out at different places in their personal learning and therefore undertook different interventions. It is possible to

conclude that the *one size fits all* approach the TEC employs, referred to in Chapter 1, may have had an adverse effect as for some the programme will be just right and for other ECTs it will be either too demanding or too easy. At present the TEC is in the process of designing a tailor-made part-time course, which will be adaptable to the student's specific needs or wishes (Kan, 2014). Kan proposes virtual university campuses to attract more adults to continuing education programmes. It is hoped that courses can be planned to suit each trainee teacher's specific experience and/or capability, which would mean an end to the present *one size fits all* approach. It is therefore significant to enquire further into the area of designing personalised trajectories for ECTs where previous qualifications are identified and individual needs are looked at. The findings of this research suggest that the more the TEC is able to tailor to the ECTs' needs the better they will be supported in their transition to becoming EFL teachers.

Additionally, the focus of this research could be widened and a large scale-study on teacher resilience could be conducted of a sample of ECTs taken from different B.Ed. courses, not just EFL, but other disciplines within the TEC such as Mathematics, Economics, History and Dutch, four core subjects of the school curriculum. This comparative research could investigate the development of ECTs' resilience by exploring the challenges they encounter in these particular disciplines. The findings could be used when designing induction trajectories.

As teacher educators we accompany ECTs on their journey of self-discovery and in this particular case the researcher was witness to how they coped with their first demanding years of teaching. These ECTs' stories will hopefully provide encouragement to others struggling at the beginning of their teaching career. They may recognize themselves in the stories. The twelve cases were intended to be teaching vehicles offering elaborate descriptions of why teaching may be an attractive profession and why ECTs stay in the profession. These cases may hopefully prove helpful for beginning teachers who would like to read biographically embedded personal beliefs and stories about teaching. The ECTs' reflections, which are of an interpretative kind, could be seen as teachers' tacit knowledge made explicit.

The intention was to offer a unique insight into ECTs' learning from particular school contexts as well as from more generalized theory about teaching and learning. Often

under the pressure of accreditation boards, most trainee programmes today offer instructions in brief ten-week-long traineeships, addressing discrete competences such as interpersonal skills or subject specific knowledge. Thus, current focus may ultimately result in losing sight of the whole teacher and or person. In the interviews, a holistic approach was used concentrating on the here and now of the ECTs' school practice. The ECTs' attention was focused both inward on their own practice, and outward on the contextual conditions in which their teaching took place. The ECTs were seen as individuals explaining their stories not as representatives of a type. Every story was an account of an ECT's professional growth.

It would seem from the results of this research that the topic of ECTs' resilience warrants further investigation in the Netherlands, as the development of resilience may assist with retaining more teachers in the early stages of the profession. When allocating courses to ECTs the school should recognize the need to participate in induction and development activities designed especially for ECTs. At the start of their first school year, the ECTs should be assigned mentors who may help them adapt to the school context and learn to teach in ways consistent with the curriculum standards.

The findings of this research suggest that the ECTs need strong differentiated pedagogical skills to be able to tailor lessons to pupils' needs belonging to a specific Dutch school type. Therefore, feedback and mentoring sessions from peers and more experienced colleagues should be provided in the form of modelling lessons and co-teaching. It is important to improve self-evaluation of teaching by connecting to the "real world" of the profession through scenarios, classroom visits and video analysis of teaching (Hong, 2010, 2012; Schildwacht, 2012). The critical incidents approach employed in this research, designed to support ECTs in building stories about their teaching experiences, can be used as a teaching methodology at the TEC. The ECTs can discuss their stories with each other and their mentors.

The key personal factors which contributed to the development of or changes in resilience appeared to be self-efficacy and a sense of agency. The capacity to be resilient will almost certainly fluctuate over a course of a teacher's career, so resilience training should be provided. This will enhance the ECTs' feeling of well-being. Resilience is not simply an individual trait but more a capacity that arises through interactions between teachers

and pupils. Engaging in contemplative practices such as mindfulness will promote increased awareness of the present moment, encouraging the experience of the here and now in a calm and clear manner, without imposing judgement (Kabat-Zinn, 2003).

Finally, the key contextual factors were collegiality and supportive leadership and some form of mentoring. The findings of this research seem to suggest that resilient ECTs take their professional learning seriously. They learn from their professional community with colleagues and peers. Therefore, it seems useful to explicitly address ways ECTs can develop supporting, trusting networks of colleagues and peers who work together (Crasborn et al., 2008; Tait, 2008; Crasborn & Hennissen, 2010). It is suggested that induction programmes include: (1) facilitating collegial learning communities; (2) offering intervision opportunities with peers, possibly by means of an online chat room including experienced teachers who are willing to share their strategies and (3) creating a safe atmosphere when novices seek advice or support both in the TEC as in school (Kessels, 2010, 2013).

7.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Since, to the knowledge of the researcher, this seems to be one of the few studies on ECTs' resilience in the Dutch context, there is still a large gap in this area. Whilst recognising that knowledge and practices in the field of resilience are situated in a particular school context, a number of possible themes for a future research agenda will be suggested next.

A possible further study could be research about pre-service teachers' ideas on resilience in the Netherlands. This would provide teacher educators with important information to help design curricula and programme directions.

Although the ECTs in this research overcame the difficulties presented to them in their early careers and have so far stayed in the profession, there are also teachers who give up teaching and leave the profession. It is important to enquire further about this area of research, distinguishing between stayers, leavers and movers and find out what their motivation is to either stay at a particular school, drop out, or move to a different school.

Offering a resilience-building programme to these teachers may help them grow and get better at responding to challenging circumstances.

Additional research could be done to explore the experiences of EFL teachers as they progress from early to middle, to the latter stages of their career. How do their perceptions of resilience change as they grow as teachers? To what degree do teachers allow for greater attention to learning and sharing? Further research could focus on a study of EFL teachers at different stages: pre-service, early, middle and late to investigate their descriptions of what factors impact on their resilience. This research could help to develop understanding about why some teachers remain successful in their work, pursuing further studies and others need to reassess and may have self-doubts, following Huberman's (1989) professional life cycle.

The ways in which ECTs may professionalise themselves warrants further investigation. The perception that school is a learning place rather than a work place should be further developed. Resilience building programmes could become part of initial teacher education courses and professional learning programmes. The school community as a whole has a responsibility for the quality of learning, not only by its beginning members but also its more experienced members.

7.6 Concluding Remarks

As researchers we must engage in meaningful dialogue and this requires us to listen as much as we speak. Ultimately, we must "move beyond the important work of knowledge creation and theory building to apply our scholarly resources to benefit people more directly" (Ellingson, 2013: 435). Within her practice as a teacher educator, the researcher wanted to understand the ECTs better. Throughout the process she grew to appreciate the twelve ECTs' unique stories of resilience and felt grateful that she was allowed to listen to their stories and learn from them. The ECTs not only described feelings of being overwhelmed by the multiple demands of their first years of teaching, but also described how strategies and working relationships may develop resilience, and help them remain in teaching. This research is intended to support other ECTs in their journey to become a resilient teacher. To conclude, it is perhaps important *to listen to* the following extract in

which Alice emphasises how much the concept of resilience is developmental and not static and that ECTs need to seek out support.

> **Alice**: To me resilience is a skill that you can learn. I would like to add that you need people around you who can help you learn this skill. It is very difficult doing it all on your own. [E-mail]

Appendix 1: A Framework of Conditions supporting ECT Resilience

A Framework of Conditions Supporting Early Career Teacher (ECT) Resilience

POLICIES & PRACTICES

Policies and practices refer to the officially mandated statements, guidelines, values and prescriptions that both enable and constrain ECT wellbeing. ECT resilience and wellbeing are enhanced when policies and practices show a strong commitment to social justice, teacher agency and voice, community engagement, and respect for local knowledge and practice.

To enhance ECT resilience, it is important to:

Provide relevant, rigorous and responsive pre-service preparation for the profession

- Foster stakeholders' collective ownership of preparation, induction and ongoing learning
- Provide diverse, rigorous and carefully planned pre-service professional experiences
- Ensure coherence between on-campus courses and the dynamic demands of the profession

Create innovative partnerships and initiatives that assist smooth transitions to the workforce

- Support professional development suitable to the school context
- Acknowledge the value of previous professional experiences and expertise
- Provide additional professional and financial resources for complex school settings

Implement transparent, fair and responsive employment processes

- Notify school appointments in a timely manner
- Provide opportunities for continuity of employment
- Ensure equitable access to support, resources and learning opportunities
- Provide professional development that equips school leaders to support ECTs

TEACHERS' WORK

Teachers' work refers to the complex array of practices, knowledge, relationships and ethical considerations that comprise the role of the teacher. ECT resilience is promoted when the focus is on understanding the complex, intense and unpredictable nature of teachers' work rather than on individual deficits and blame.

To enhance ECT resilience, it is important to:

Acknowledge the complex, intense and unpredictable nature of teachers' work

- Attend to the physical, intellectual, relational and emotional dimensions of teachers' work
- Acknowledge that teachers' work is demanding and tiring

Develop teachers' curriculum and pedagogical knowledge and strategies

- Provide opportunities for collaborative planning, teaching, assessment and reporting
- Allocate space and structures for teachers' critical and reflective work
- Focus on student diversity, passions and interests
- Promote innovative and engaging curriculum practices

Provide support to create engaging learning environments

- Take collective ownership of students' wellbeing and behaviour
- Develop beliefs and practices that engage students and encourage constructive behaviours
- Create collaborative and democratic learning environments
- Make authentic connections between students' learning and their life-worlds

Ensure access to appropriate ongoing support, resources and learning opportunities

- Provide equitable and timely access to needs-based professional learning
- Support the development of pedagogical beliefs, values and practices
- Provide adequate release time from face-to-face teaching

SCHOOL CULTURE

School culture refers to the values, beliefs, norms, assumptions, behaviours and relationships that characterise the daily rituals of school life. ECT resilience flourishes in schools that promote collaborative relationships, professional learning communities, educative forms of leadership and democratic decision-making.

To enhance ECT resilience, it is important to:

Promote a sense of belonging and social connectedness

- Practise affirmation
- Recognise and value diverse perspectives, practices and backgrounds
- Foster trust and goodwill
- Minimise isolation
- Take collective responsibility for teacher wellbeing and safety

Develop educative, democratic and empowering processes

- Promote distributive leadership
- Work through problems respectfully
- Include all school personnel regardless of employment status
- Establish a commitment to social justice

Provide formal and informal transition/ induction processes

- Appoint mentors/coaches/buddies
- Provide ongoing induction
- Apply equitable processes regardless of length and nature of appointment
- Promote understanding and appreciation of the different roles in the school

Develop a professional learning community

- Promote opportunities for risk taking and innovation
- Provide environments and resources that optimise teaching and learning
- Provide opportunities for collaborative learning
- Take collective responsibility for student behaviour, learning and wellbeing

RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships refers to the social and professional networks, human connections and belongingness experienced by ECTs. Schools that value relationships focus on the complex emotional needs of ECTs and encourage social exchanges that foster respect, trust, care and integrity. ECT resilience benefits significantly when these values are evident in policies and practice.

To enhance ECT resilience, it is important to:

Promote a sense of belonging, acceptance and wellbeing

- Foster relationships based on mutual trust, respect, care and integrity
- Help manage personal and professional challenges and conflicts
- Encourage involvement in professional and community networks
- Value support from family, friends and peers

Place student-teacher relationships at the heart of the teaching-learning process

- Develop positive and democratic relationships with students
- Involve parents/caregivers in their children's learning
- Enjoy interacting with students and celebrate their successes
- Develop learning communities where everyone encourages each other's learning
- Celebrate student innovation and success in and beyond the classroom

Foster professional growth

- Value the personal strengths and resources of teachers
- Give specific, constructive and timely feedback
- Give explicit affirmation and acknowledgement
- Support communication with parents/ caregivers/community

Promote collective ownership and responsibility for professional relationships

- Cultivate a generosity of spirit
- Share responsibility for maintaining positive relationships
- Create time and spaces for dialogue and collaboration

TEACHER IDENTITY

Teacher identity refers to the development of one's awareness and understanding of self as a teacher. Teacher resilience is enhanced when ECTs engage in processes of self-reflection and self-understanding that sustain their personal identity, while at the same time developing a robust teacher identity.

To enhance ECT resilience, it is important to:

Understand the interplay between personal and professional identities

- Recognise that personal and professional identities are interconnected
- Recognise that teachers' identities are produced in particular social and cultural contexts
- Understand the evolving nature of personal-professional identities
- Recognise that emotions are an integral part of identity development

Engage in self-reflection

- Accommodate new and different ways of thinking
- Challenge and develop beliefs, assumptions, values and practices
- Negotiate the contradictions and tensions of teaching
- Employ proactive coping strategies

Foster a sense of agency, efficacy and self-worth

- Commit to the ethical and moral purposes of teaching
- Develop a high level of social and emotional responsiveness
- Maintain hope and optimism
- Promote work-life balance and wellbeing
- Seek help and support

Early Career Teacher Resilience

Johnson, Down, Le Cornu, Peters, Sullivan, Pearce, Hunter – (2012)

Appendix 2: Professional Biographical Profile

Teacher Survey

Participant ID:_____

Teacher Experience:

1. How many years have you been teaching in your entire career?
2. How many years have you been teaching in this school?
3. What grade(s) do you currently teach?
4. What subjects do you currently teach?

Additional teaching experience

1. Have you taught in other schools?
2. In what setting? Urban, suburban or rural.
3. How many years have you taught in other schools?

Education and credentials

1. What degrees do you hold beyond secondary school?
2. Are you certified to teach?
3. If you entered the teaching through an alternate route please specify.

Demographics

1. Date of birth
2. Gender

Appendix 3: First Interview Protocol

The sample questions below will serve as a guideline for the face-to-face interviews to be conducted with the research participants. Not all of these questions will be covered in a single interview session.

ECT's first individual interview protocol

Background teaching

1. Can you explain the context of your life, leading up to the present position?
2. What does it mean to you to be a student teacher?
3. Can you give me a brief overview of your teaching career?
4. Draw a line of your recent teaching experiences.
5. Can you tell me about a few of the most stressful incidents you have experienced?
6. What are your biggest strengths and weaknesses as a teacher?
7. Is there anything you are particularly proud of?
8. What are your main sources of support? Who do you talk to?
9. What advice would you give a teacher who would like to apply to teach at this school?
10. How do you debrief and download the day?

Critical Incident and relational map

11. Can you mention a critical incident?
12. Please create a relational map by placing your name in the centre of the paper and the names of all the people who support you. Could you describe each support person as you draw your map?
13. How do you see your role as a teacher?
14. What is a good class to you?

Definition of resilience/ perception that they are resilient

15. What is your definition of resilience?

16. Is there anything in your personal life that makes you feel resilient?

17. How do you feel that you are different from a teacher who is not, in your opinion, resilient?

18. How would you recognize a resilient teacher?

Retention

19. Have you ever considered withdrawing from teaching? If so why and what helped you decide to continue on in education?

Appendix 4: Critical Incident Report

Critical Incident Report (based on Brookfield, S.D. (1995) *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass)

The following is a critical incident report. Tell me about a time when you seriously re-evaluated your career choice. You are invited to reflect on a critical incident in your career that remains significant to you in retrospect.

What events led up to this incident?

Critical incident. What happened?

Who was involved?

What did you do? What were your coping strategies?

What support did you get?

How has the experience affected you?

What have you learned from it?

Appendix 5: Second Interview Protocol

ECT's second individual interview protocol

1. Has anything changed since our last interview?

2. Could you draw another line of your recent teaching experiences?

3. What strategies have you developed to deal with stress from school?

Professional Learning

4. Describe your interactions with colleagues – formal or informal, in school or outside of school.

5. How have these interactions supported or failed to support your growth as a teacher?

6. What roles do the following (people) play in keeping you resilient?

    i. Colleagues
    ii. Pupils
    iii. Management
    iv. Professional learning

7. Where do you see yourself in five years time?

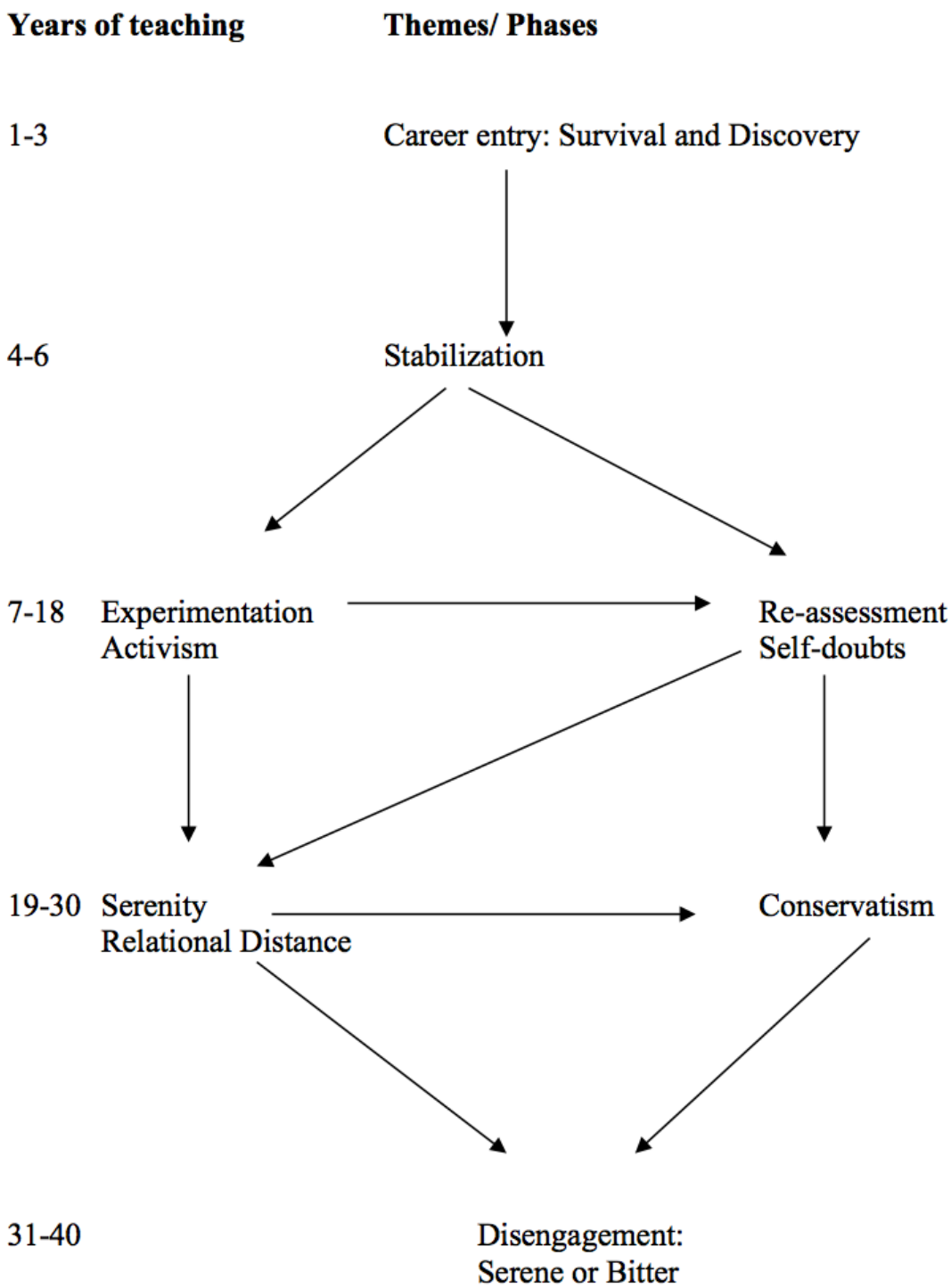
8. What factors would keep you in teaching?

9. Did your school offer you an induction programme? If so how did it help you?

10. Can you draw another relational map?

Appendix 6: Huberman's Teacher Career Cycle

Huberman's successive themes of the teacher career cycle: schematic model



Huberman, M. (1989) "The Professional life cycles of teachers" in *Teachers College Records* Vol. 91/1 Fall

Appendix 7: Datasets

Presentation of Datasets

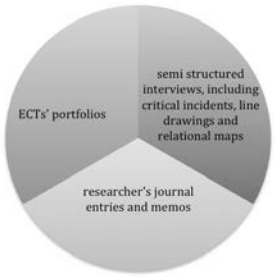


Figure 1: datasets

cohort	ECT	interview 1	interview 2	portfolio
long-term	Merlin	x		
	Adrian	x	x	
	Ralph	x		
	Cheryl	x	x	
regular	Vera	x	x	x
	Miriam	x	x	x
	Florence	x	x	x
	Linda	x	x	x
beginning	Alice	x	x	x
	Dorothy	x	x	x
	Rachel	x	x	x
	Trudy	x	x	

Figure 2: Interviews and portfolio per ECT

Merlin and Ralph were invited to a second interview, but never replied to the researcher's E-mail. All four long-term ECTs could no longer retrace their teaching portfolios, as their final traineeship took place more than three years ago and they had moved house or lost the paper versions. Trudy was exempted from her first year traineeship, because of her previous teaching experience at primary schools. This meant that she did not submit a teaching portfolio in the first year at the TEC.

Appendix 8: Vignettes of the Twelve ECTs

Short Vignettes of the Twelve ECTs

What follows are excerpts of the stories of resilience as told by Merlin, Adrian, Ralph, Cheryl, Vera, Miriam, Florence, Linda, Alice, Dorothy, Rachel and Trudy and their portrayals of how they survived and also thrived in the face of the challenges they experienced in their classrooms (cf. Yin, 2014: 186). The ECTs' descriptions of their experiences were rich in detail and included many reflections. The synopsis found in this appendix is not an attempt to present a complete picture of each ECT, but it underscores the range of backgrounds of the cases and the difference in their views and opinions about resilience. The stories illustrate the various degrees of resilience in response to the differing challenging situations defined as critical incidents in Chapter 3.6.2. Abbreviated vignettes are presented in the order of EFL teaching years, starting with the long-term students and moving on to the regular students and finishing with the beginning students. The vignettes provide biographical and demographic data, including age category, qualifications and past occupations.

Each vignette starts with a short biographical summary entitled *work and life context*, as explained in Chapter 3.5.1. Next each vignette is built around a particular strategy employed by the ECT as a response to a critical incident. The vignette headings are direct quotations taken from the reflection presented in the vignette, addressing a key strategy impacting on the ECTs' resilience, as discussed in their interviews. The ECT's reflection notes the reference in italics to the themes addressing the second research question as indicated in *Table 1* also presented and explained in Chapter 4. The ECTs' definitions of resilience are presented at the end of their vignettes.

Research question 2: strategies impacting on resilience				
Name		**Strategies**	**Strategies**	**Vignettes**
long term Merlin		emotional regulation		*"It differs a lot per class how much of myself I show to them."*
Adrian		emotional regulation		*"You avoid the escalation and get on with your work …"*
Ralph		goal setting		*"It's the kids that matter to me. I like the kids, English is just a vehicle …"*
Cheryl		goal setting		*"You have 28 kids looking at you as the leader not as a sidekick"*
regular Vera		help seeking	emotional regulation	*"My colleague said you should never become real angry, you should act angry …"*
Miriam		emotional regulation		*"I don't only blame it on the pupil, I also have a short fuse at times."*
Florence		help seeking	emotional regulation	*" My mum says: You cannot be taught everything, you also need to experience things."*
Linda		goal setting	seeking renewal	*"My first thought was: "How on earth am I going to keep these children quiet?"*
Beginning Alice		emotional regulation		*"The first job was basically surviving for me …"*
Dorothy		goal setting		*"I like to be in a positive environment …"*
Rachel		goal setting		*"I believe in natural parenting. I'm afraid to become everything I don't want to be."*
Trudy		seeking renewal		*"Never work harder than your students …"*

Table 1: 4 themes addressing the second research question about the kinds of strategies contributing to changes in ECTs' resilience, and designing the vignettes of twelve ECTs

Cohort one, long-term students

8.1: A portrait of Merlin: "It differs a lot per class how much of myself I show to them."

Work and life context

Merlin is a 37-year-old, ninth year, trainee teacher from the Netherlands. He has taught in three different schools, including a College of Arts before teaching in his present secondary vocational education college. He was in his ninth year at the TEC when the research was carried out and every three years he needed to look for another job as his contract could not be renewed because he was unqualified. He moved from the full-time to the part-time course at the TEC, when he accepted teaching posts of more than four days a week. His major obstacle at the TEC is completing his final assignment the Action Research Report, which normally takes half a year. When he had to leave his third school he said: "that school I really loved … and then I had to leave because I was such an idiot, because I didn't manage to get my diploma yet." He had passed all his traineeships with good marks, including a teaching experience at a College for Continuing Education in England. In his interview, he said that his time in England was a good experience but "a bit out of my league as I had to teach English to adults." The idea of making a difference in someone's life was an important factor for Merlin, when deciding whether to remain in education. Merlin had not graduated at the time of the research. At his present school they offered coaching sessions to him:

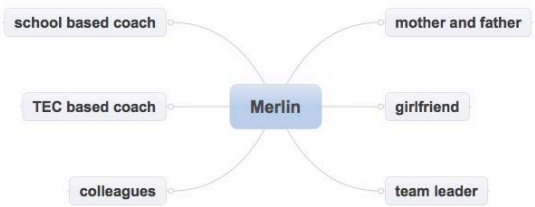
> **Merlin:** … that really helped because I felt in the beginning that I was drowning, instead of swimming, at this new school, because there was so much I had to do. [Interview 1]

What strategy impacts on his resilience?

He loves the contact with his pupils, and he explained that was his main drive to go to school every day. He described how important it was to build relationships with pupils, and that as a teacher you need to regulate your emotions because it may affect the performance of the pupils. He sees this as his major strategy that impacts on his resilience:

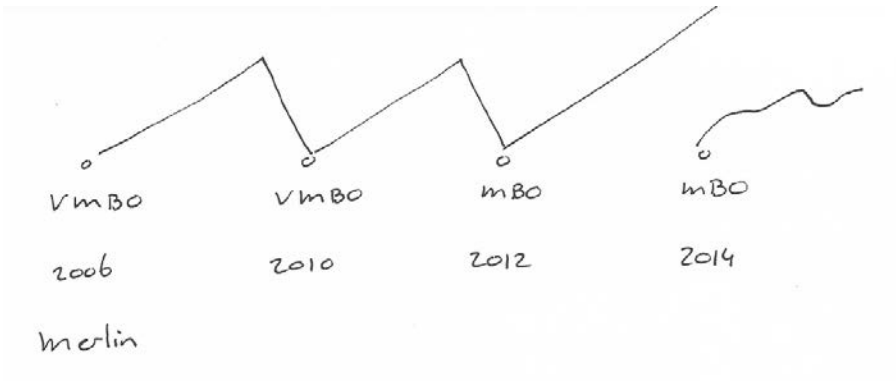
> **Merlin:** I share things with them at a time that I think I'm able to do that, because some classes you have a connection with, where you're actually able to show a lot of yourself to the class, and some classes are which are -- well, it might be just pure coincidence that there are pupils in there that actually have a click with you, but some classes I don't. It differs a lot per class how much of myself I show to them. **(*emotional regulation*)** [Interview 1]

His girlfriend is his most important guide on the side when he feels frustrated about the progress he makes at the TEC. He drew the following relational map.



Merlin's relational map, interview 1

Teaching is not stressful to him but the administration and the organisation around schoolwork is. Merlin recognizes a lot of himself in the pupils, how they manage their work, how they fear going to school, doing public speaking and taking exams. He thinks that has really helped with making the pupils understand that he is on their side.



Merlin's line drawing, interview 1

Definition of resilience

> **Merlin**: The thing I love about teaching is the contact you have with the students. So, the fact that you actually can make a difference in somebody's life, in one way or another. [Interview 1]

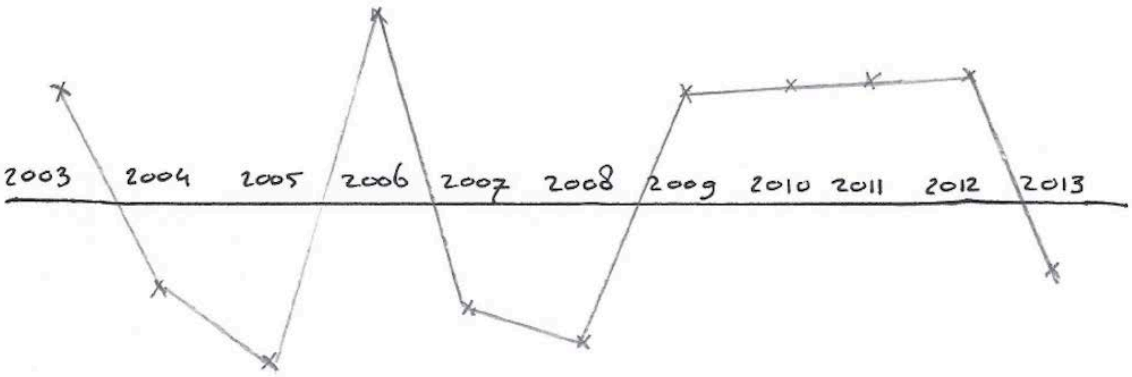
8.2: A portrait of Adrian: "You avoid the escalation and get on with your work."

Work and life context

Adrian is a 35-year-old, ninth year, trainee teacher from the Netherlands. He also started as a full time student at the TEC. He has worked in eight different schools including unpaid internships. His last teaching portfolio for the TEC was positively assessed eight years ago. Unfortunately, he had lost the portfolio because he had moved house many times. His first teaching experiences felt like "doing the grunge work, I was in the trenches." He is politically active and compares his goal setting at school to how the socialist party always aimed for the highest possible objective. He said: "My ideals are very high, so nobody can touch them." His personal life is rather complicated which means that he has not dedicated enough time to his studies. He obtained custody over his first child but hardly ever sees him as the child lives in Denmark with his first partner. He became father of a second child with his present partner during the time of the research. Adrian had not graduated at the time of the research.

> **Adrian**: I always had the intention, it's just things got in the way and that was very debilitating. [Interview 1]

He characterised himself by: "I have ADHD, I'm very opinionated, and big, loud, and sometimes not as modest as I should be."



Adrian's line drawing, interview 1

What strategy impacts on his resilience?

Adrian only needs to finish his Action Research Report and then he will be able to graduate. In his present job, he works as a supply teacher at schools that needed a new EFL teacher urgently as members of staff suffered from burnout. He often ends up with the hardest classes. He is very pleased with his present job, as he feels he can make a difference to the lives of kids who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and who do not receive a lot of support from home. His strategy that impacts on his resilience involved ignoring the pupil who tried to be disruptive.

> **Adrian**: I have learned to leave the student and ignore him for the rest of the class until the point comes that he realizes that he is no longer involved and that he's no longer heard, and the reason for that is that he messed up by not handing over his phone. Of course, it might not be that he then automatically will hand over the phone, but at least he will know that he did something wrong, that's a learning moment for him. You avoid the escalation, you get on with your work because it's not that annoying or interrupting to your class, it is not really an issue. So, yes, that is something, there's a difference between somebody that has just started and me. **(*emotional regulation*)** [Interview 2]

He frequently commented on how he had missed the link between theory and practice at the TEC: "The TEC programme is rather theoretical and at times fragmented" [Interview 2]. He claimed that pupils do not change that much, it is the world around them that does. After nine years, he feels he is experienced and teaching does not cost him any effort. At coaching meetings with novices he said: "I already know most of what they are going to tell me." Adrian had finished pre-university education (VWO, see *table 1* Chapter 5) and had no difficulty with the content knowledge and general pedagogical courses at the

TEC. Adrian's perseverance as well as his sense of achievement at the end of the school year made him reflect the following:

> **Adrian**: Also thinking that okay, this is my eighth job, … by now I should have found something where I could get, you know, a permanent job… And I checked their final test last week and I was like well, I think I actually achieved something in their level of English as well, and I think I gained a lot of respect… So that made me – gave me a little boost and then I thought well, on to the next job. [Interview 2]

Adrian's relational map interview 1

Definition of resilience

> **Adrian**: I stuck it out mostly, because I understood that if I wouldn't do it anymore there wouldn't be anybody else and these students would be wiped out. I was the last straw for them. [Interview 2]

8.3: A portrait of Ralph: "It's the kids that matter to me. I like the kids, English is just a vehicle."

Work and life context

Ralph is a 44-year-old, eighth year, trainee teacher from the Netherlands. He and his partner have two children. He started a replacement job very soon after he had enrolled at the TEC as a full time student in 2007. When asked to give his motivation to go into teaching he simply said: "Because I love kids, and it's what I'm good at." His primary goal is to ensure pupil achievement. He is very engaged with his pupils and feels that his workplace experiences depend on the quality of tasks given to him at the school. Ralph had not graduated at the time of the research.

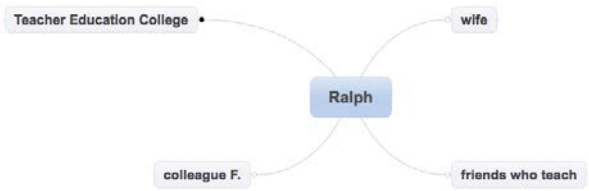
What strategy impacts on his resilience?

Ralph frequently indicated that he remained in teaching because of the relationship with the pupils. All ECTs referred to this but Ralph was most consistent about it. As a long-

term ECT he had to find another school every three years, and he found the hardest part of leaving one school for another that he had to leave his pupils behind. Ralph is proud of his ability to connect with pupils, which he sees as his main performance goal:

> **Ralph:** [laughs] Well, if I look at that right now, it's because, in teaching, the qualities I have as a person, I can use them over there, and they are appreciated over there. Well, to me the instant reward from children. I like teaching, I like children a lot and English is just a vehicle to do that. It could also be Biology, I don't care, it's the kids that matter to me. I love that. **(*goal setting*)** [Interview 1]

Teaching to Ralph is a job, a job in the good and honourable sense of the word. His job gives him a particular kind of identity and makes him what he is, which helps to foster his resilience. When Ralph was asked to draw his relational map he became emotional, explaining that his "wife was his best buddy." Whenever difficulties arose at his work he would consult his wife and so far she had always given him the right advice.



Ralph's relational map interview 1

Ralph showed that he at one time in his eighth year career as a teacher had a low level of self-efficacy, when he posed the question:

> **Ralph**: Do I really want to remain a teacher? … I took my diary out … when do the holidays start? And I just counted back the weeks. [Interview 1]

The TEC, with its exams, had become larger than life: "The name of the college [TEC] is synonymous with failure so it is always difficult to come here" [Interview 1]. In Ralph's case, it seemed that his teaching career included some difficult moments, but the overall feeling of being able to make a difference to his pupils' lives was central (See his line drawing in Chapter 7.2).

Definition of resilience

> **Ralph:** It's the kids. Like I said, it doesn't have anything to do with English. It could have been Biology, it could have been Dutch, I don't care. … [Interview 1]

8.4: A portrait of Cheryl: "You have 28 kids looking at you as the leader not as a sidekick."

Work and life context

Cheryl is a 29-year-old, seventh year, trainee teacher, originally from Curaçao, had started the TEC as a full time student. She taught in an urban secondary school, before moving to her present school, which has recently given her a permanent contract as she obtained her B.Ed. qualification in 2015.

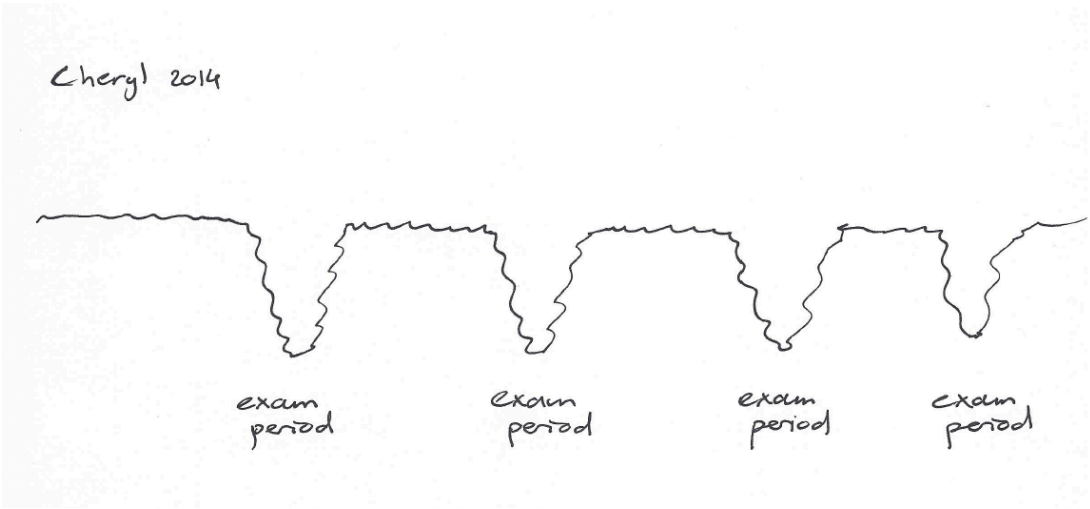
What strategy impacts on her resilience?

She stated that classroom management was her biggest challenge in her first years. On two occasions her principal undermined her authority by stepping into her classroom and confronting her with her classroom procedures, which made a big impact on her resilience. She set her own performance goal by saying that she wanted to be included in the process: "I would like to fix things on my own and I keep you informed, if this becomes too much for me." Instead her Management took away her authority "by running the show" for her.

> **Cheryl**: It was a bumpy ride, like I said … suddenly you have 28 kids looking at you as the leader whereas before you were just the sidekick. So that's why I was so taken aback when she [Cheryl's manager] walked in. … To the class she said "We are going to make two promises: on your part when the teacher asks you to do something politely and nicely, be quiet. Be quiet and do what she asks you." Then she turned around, in front of the class still, and said to me, "And you can be more flexible right? You pretend you don't see everything." You know, I lost my authority at that point really. **(*goal setting*)** [Interview 1]

Goal setting is one of the strategies that impacts on her resilience. Cheryl wants to be seen as "the leader and not just the sidekick", and she struggles with that. Cheryl drew a story line (as shown below) that indicated the periods around designing tests, assessing

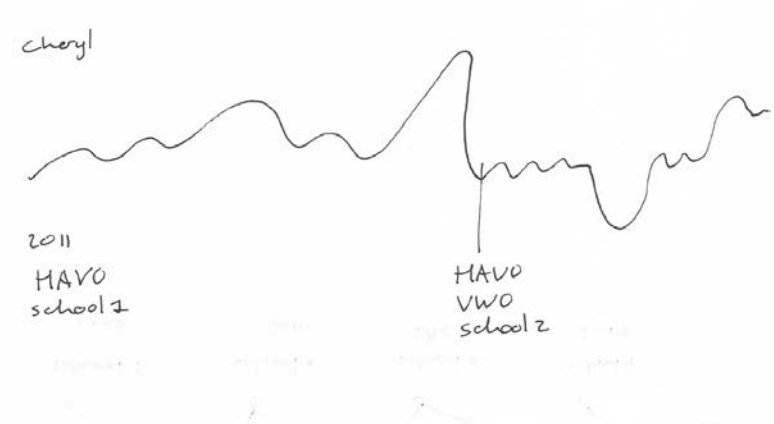
pupils and writing reports. This proved to be the major low points in her academic school year. She also felt she had been left to her own devices.



Cheryl's line drawing, interview 1

> **Cheryl**: But then, at the same time you have to prepare for the real test week, and I have been given the task to co-ordinate all tests for all year two students. … For me, that's four times a year, it's like, "Don't talk to me, I'm busy." [Interview 1]

On several occasions, she mentioned that her colleagues did not consider supporting her in how to write reports and do associated tasks. Cheryl felt unprepared to design exams and at the same time she wanted to be perceived as competent and did not want to ask for help. She explained her mother was very supportive to her and she regularly phoned her to discuss issues with her. As a novice, Cheryl feared being perceived as incompetent when asking for help, which did not contribute towards her development of resilience.



Cheryl's representation of her teaching experiences, interview 2

Definition of resilience

> **Cheryl:** Because I love teaching, and it's what I'm good at. [Interview 1]

Cohort two, regular students

8.5: A portrait of Vera: "My colleague said you should never become real angry, you should act angry. "

Work and life context

Vera is a 33-year-old, sixth year, trainee teacher with a previous Bachelor's degree in Communication and Social Interaction Studies. Vera was born in Suriname and then moved to Curaçao where she lived for 10 years. At the time of the second interview, she had just given birth to her second child and her father was in hospital. Combining her family life with finishing her B.Ed. is a real challenge (See her line drawing in Chapter 7). Vera had not graduated at the time of the research.

What strategy impacts on her resilience?

Vera felt that there were a lot of rewards "helping kids and see them grow". She put forward a positive story-line about opportunities that were offered to her whereas her tone of voice indicated that she was exhausted. She admits that classroom management is her biggest headache. The kids love her, but recently there had been a fight between two boys and she had to call for the janitor. Her strategy, which contributed to the development of her resilience, was to seek help by going to her boss and asking a colleague to observe her class.

> **Vera**: It's different in the way that the pupils react to the teacher. It's different in the whole atmosphere, in the school, in the building. And sometimes it's a bit violent even. **…** Some children, there's a small group of children, they take the whole street culture, they take it into the school and that has an effect on how everyone -- everyone's a bit tense to keep it on where – how do you say it, to prevent things from escalating. I turned to my colleagues. That's when I learned that you should never become real angry you should act angry. **(*help seeking, emotional regulation*)** [Interview 1]

Her supportive management and colleagues were a contributing factor towards her resilience. Her mother was also somebody she would contact when she needed a sympathetic ear. Whenever Vera experienced difficulties in managing her private life with her working life, they were prepared to step in and come up with solutions. She said she really enjoyed her teaching but struggled to study for the final exams that were part of

her B.Ed. When asked whether she felt resilient in her second interview, which took place just before the summer holidays of 2015, she said:

> **Vera**: Right now I don't feel too energetic, maybe also because all this happened with my father and young children. Well, it's always hectic at work as well, because every day I know I have to fight to have a bit of control in some classes, not all the classes of course. I also have excellent classes which I enjoy teaching. [Interview 2]

Definition of resilience

> **Vera:** At the moment, I have no resilience. And I feel like I have hit rock bottom … I've had this feeling for quite a while. [Interview 2]

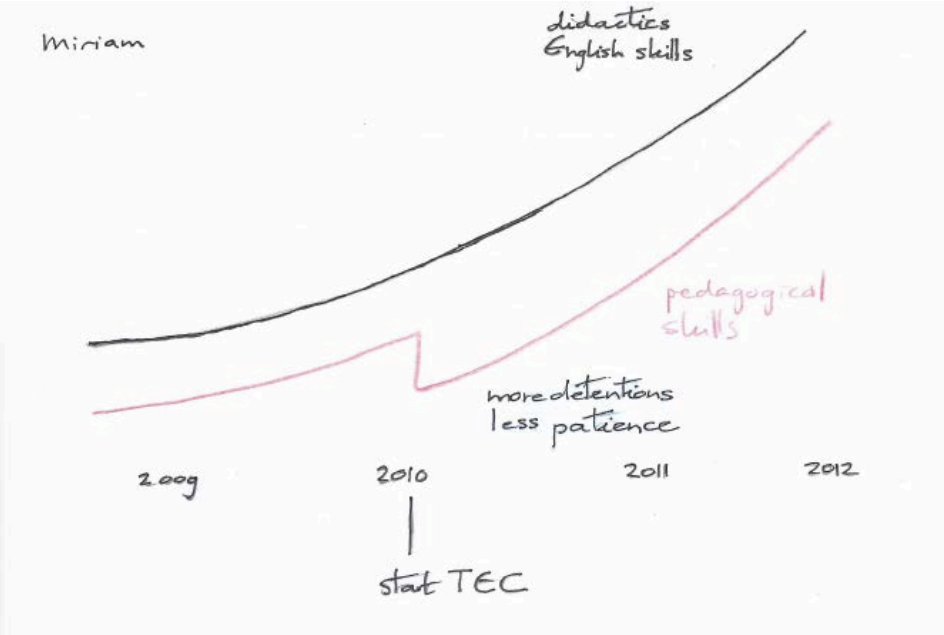
8.6: A portrait of Miriam: "I don't only blame it on the pupil, I also have a short fuse at times."

Work and life context

Miriam is a 52-year-old, sixth year, trainee teacher from the Netherlands. She decided to become a primary teacher, because she no longer enjoyed her work for a commercial company. After having finished her B.Ed. in primary education, she still was not happy in her job and consequently moved on to a secondary school where she started teaching English. In the same year, she enrolled at the TEC taking an EFL course. Miriam obtained her B.Ed. qualification in 2015.

What strategy impacts on her resilience?

She was very specific about her line drawing, insisting that there had to be two lines (as shown in her line drawing). One line indicated her growth in content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (in her words English and didactics) and the other line showed her growth in general pedagogical skills, which reflects how the TEC courses are organised.



Miriam's line drawing, interview 1

Miriam seems to go through moments of stabilization and experimentation, similar to Huberman's study of teacher life cycles (See *Appendix 6*). She loves her pupils, but struggles to keep a good balance between her teaching tasks, her exams for the TEC and her private life. The reflection shows how her manager appreciates that she always takes her pupil's viewpoint into account when discussing a classroom incident.

> **Miriam**: Every time when I have done -- when I've had a day or a problem with the pupils, then I don't -- for example, when something happens that shouldn't have happened, then children are sent to a special room 112, you have to write a report. My manager always says, "Miriam, when you have to write your report, you always take into account your part in what happened. You don't blame it only on the pupil. **(*emotional regulation*)** [Interview 2].

She wants to show a positive attitude in the face of challenge, a contributing factor towards her resilience. Miriam is very much convinced that positive teacher pupil relationships promote pupils' overall school performance. However, she at times finds it a challenge to develop meaningful connections with all of her pupils, as is shown in the pencil case incident narrated in section 5.3.4. Emotional regulation is one of the strategies that contributed both positively and negatively towards Miriam's resilience.

Definition of resilience

> **Miriam:** My drive. My passion. [Interview 2]

8.7: A portrait of Florence: "My mum says: You cannot be taught everything, you also need to experience things. "

Work and life context

Florence is a 27-year-old, fourth year, trainee teacher from the Netherlands. She first got a Bachelor's degree in translation and then discovered during a traineeship in the USA that she really enjoyed teaching children. She consequently enrolled at the TEC. Florence obtained her B.Ed. qualification in 2016.

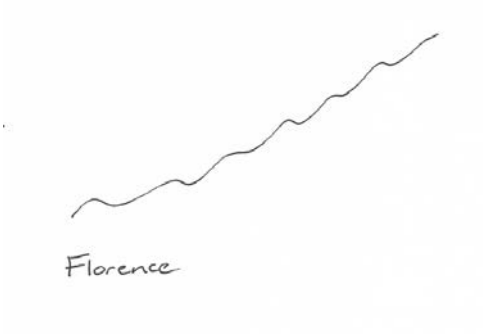
What strategy impacts on her resilience?

In her first interview, she explained that she had had some confrontational moments with pupils who refused to accept her authority as she was fairly young and "rather small" (her words) compared to some of the boys. Her strategy was to seek help but not from her coach or colleagues. She explained that her mother was a great support to her.

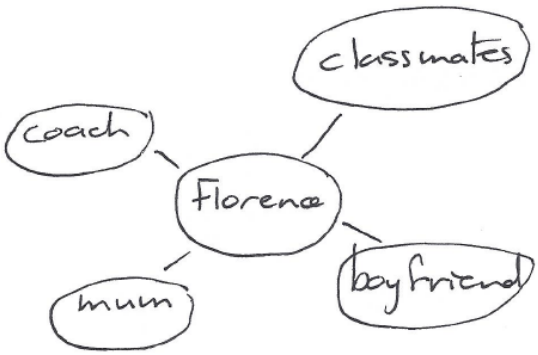
> **Florence**: Well, she usually lets me think of what did you do wrong yourself or what could you improve and not what someone else -- she always has me think about what's really the problem and what can you do to change it. …You cannot be taught everything, you also need to experience things. **(*help seeking, emotional regulation*)** [Interview 2]

When asked to give a definition of resilience during her first interview, she could not really provide one on the spot. Some time later Florence sent an E-mail:

> I'm not sure if this will help you, but I sometimes need some time to process things and then I can better answers questions like what does resilience mean to you...
> If it's still useful:
>
> *I think resilience (unlike I said before, and I kind of got stuck in that thought) means that you have to be flexible as a teacher. I worked at two schools and sometimes I had to go to both schools at the same day. Two different methods, which needed some adjustment (my bike ride was always a good switching time). At one school I had students with a laptop and at the other they worked with paper books, which was a challenge sometimes (I think you're spoiled as a teacher when all students have their own laptops).*
> *I also think it means to be able to change between levels ... I had to change my speaking and way of teaching very quickly then and that sometimes was hard.*
> *I think this is a more positive approach to resilience, although I think it also still means that you can have a 'fight' with a class one day and the next day you need to be able to put that behind you and continue what you're there for: teaching!*



Florence's line drawing, interview 1



Florence's relational map interview 1

Definition of resilience

> **Florence:** … someone who doesn't … hold a grudge and tries to do the best for their pupils, even though maybe the pupils don't really show that they want to learn anything. [Interview 2]

8.8: A portrait of Linda: "My first thought was: How on earth am I going to keep these children quiet?"

Work and life context

Linda is a 27-year-old, fourth year, trainee teacher. She arrived from Great Britain with a BA in German and Dutch. Before she started the course at the TEC, she was a language assistant at a secondary school in the south of the Netherlands. Even though she could have opted to go to university to take a full-time MA in English she decided to first take a part-time B.Ed. of 3 to 4 years, and then possibly continue with an M.Ed. for another 3 years. She was very adamant that she first wanted to learn how to teach EFL. Linda said she learned more the first weeks of her placement about the classroom practicalities, than

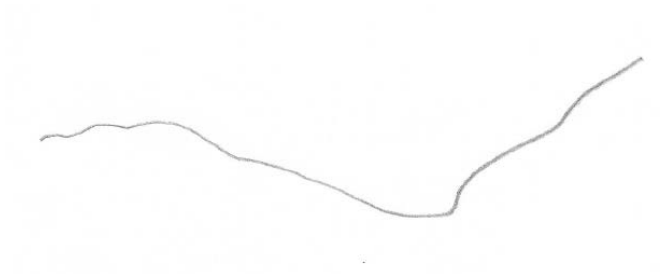
any reading of literature on pedagogics could have given her. Linda obtained her B.Ed. qualification in 2016.

What strategy impacts on her resilience?

She really enjoys teaching at a bilingual school as "You can do so much with English, especially here." Even though she started her career as a teacher very well, she said that once the coursework at the TEC started she became aware of all the decisions she had to take consciously which frightened her at first. Having had an English upbringing, she was also taken by surprise about "how relaxed school could be here … and how pupils just walk in and sit down without having to stand by their chair and stand up and say "Good morning, Mrs So and So." and then sit down. At the same time Linda had to decide when to step in as a teacher. By pretending she couldn't speak any Dutch she managed to keep the class quiet. She discussed many instances of performance goal setting.

> **Linda**: My first thing was: How on earth am I going to keep these children quiet? … The thing I liked about it most was, I think, that students can do more than they think they can, and if you really find a way of showing them how much they can do already. That really encourages them. One good thing about this traineeship of course was I pretended I couldn't speak Dutch. That really kind of forced them to speak to me in English. They surprised themselves as well … Because those kids said, "I can't speak any English." And after 10 minutes, … they actually told me what they wanted to tell me. And I was like, "you just talked to me for 10 minutes. I understood you perfectly, so I don't see what the problem is." They were like, "yeah that's true actually". **(*goal setting, seeking renewal*)** [Interview 1]

In her second interview, Linda drew a dip in the story line of her teaching because she had been invited to mentor 15 children.

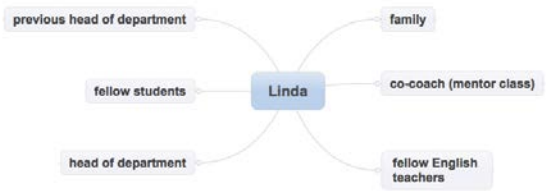


Linda's line drawing, interview 1

The mentor task was something she had underestimated, because it was demanding work as the children were supposed to come up with their own weekly planner. She decided that the setting was too free for the pupils and considered that they would not do their

work seriously. “Many of them have difficulties with concentration, they have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), … so that disrupts the balance as well.” Luckily she has a good team leader who immediately took her off the mentor task. She reflected that you really need to know your boundaries and that “only by going over the line, you know that there is one.” After having experienced this dip she learned she was much more resilient than she thought she was.

Linda acknowledges her strength as a teacher of English, and at the same time seeks to improve her lesser abilities, both markers of resilience. She tries to find an inner disposition to work with pupils of mixed abilities and who come from different backgrounds. For her the fun of her traineeships is that school is a very dynamic place and each term everything is different.



Linda’s relational map, interview 1

Definition of resilience

> **Linda**: It [resilience] means to just keep going and also to -- when things don’t go the way you want them to or maybe you think they should, learn from it, and keep going rather than letting it get you down [Interview 2].

Cohort three, beginning students

8.9: A portrait of Alice: “The first job was basically surviving for me.”

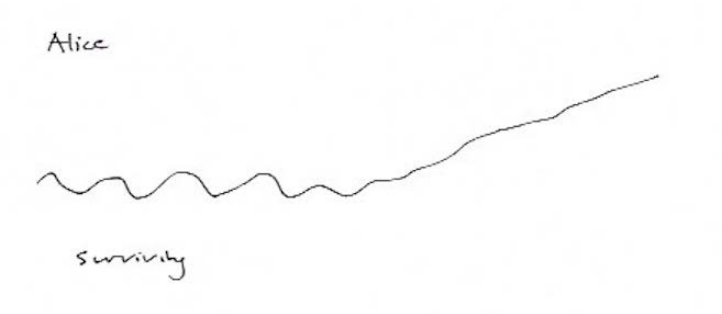
Work and life context

Alice is a 27-year-old, second year, trainee teacher from the Netherlands. She started her career as an assistant teacher at a primary school:

> **Alice**: Group five and six, about 9 to 10-year-olds, which was very interesting. It was not English, but a lot of maths, Dutch language, a lot of artwork, little things that I like to do…I like the teaching. I like working with kids [Interview 1].

Then she went to London with a friend and that is where she decided to become an EFL teacher. She started as a supply teacher for group 3 and 4 at a VMBO (Pre-vocational secondary education) and was left to her own devices:

> **Alice**: I was completely alone. I felt completely alone. They left me all by myself… Year 3 and 4. The teacher before me had made such a mess out of those two years that it was more cleaning up and getting them ready for their final exams [Interview 1].



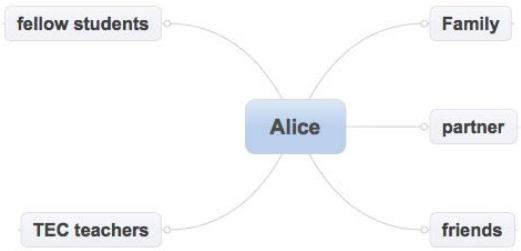
Alice's line drawing, interview 1

What strategy impacts on her resilience?

The English department was not very supportive, but the teachers of Dutch and Maths were.

> **Alice**: That first job was basically surviving for me … That first year and half there was just too much, way too much to do. Too many hours, too much work, too far away. And I think if they had offered me another year, I wouldn't have been able to finish that whole year. I would have dropped out or at least stopped working there within the first few months of the new academic year, plus it was way too much work. **(*emotional regulation*)** [Interview 2]

In both her interviews and portfolio, Alice talked about emotional exhaustion in her first year as a teacher, and she explained that her sense of emotional wellbeing affected her classroom performance, which had an impact on her resilience. After that first year she got a job that suited her a lot better. At the time of the second interview she taught an extra hour out of her spare time for pupils who struggled with English because "some just need an explanation on how to study."



Alice's relational map, interview 1

Definition of resilience

> **Alice:** What's resilience? I think it's a combination of – you make your mistakes and you have to reflect upon them. And you bounce back and start again. Don't give up. [Interview 2]

8.10: A portrait of Dorothy: "I like to be in a positive environment."

Work and life context

Dorothy is a 49-year-old, second year, trainee teacher, originally from Italy. Before enrolling at the TEC she had been teaching Italian for 8 years as a qualified teacher. She agreed that positive support from her Management helped ECTs make it through the day. She had a very supportive principal who encouraged her to take up EFL because the opportunities to teach Italian are getting fewer and fewer in Dutch schools.

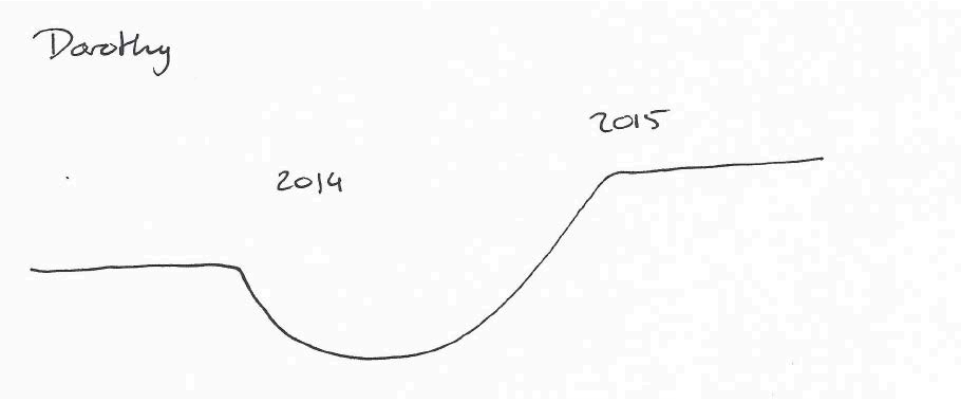
What strategy impacts on her resilience?

Dorothy is reflexive and conscientious about what pupils are and are not understanding during class time, and enjoys designing her own classroom materials. Even though she had been teaching Italian for eight years, she felt like a novice when teaching English. When her principal asked her to replace a colleague, who was off sick the following happened:

> **Dorothy**: There was this guy that was obnoxious, he was doing strange things with his mobile. If I think back on this incident I should have sent him out, … I just touched his mobile and he jumped from his chair and he was very aggressive verbally to me. And I didn't respond, I didn't want to, I just wanted him to get all his negativity out of him … I like to be in a positive environment. At the end I

> asked: Can you calm down now? What you just did was wrong. You don't react like that not to your teacher, not to anybody else. This is lack of respect. ... But this is one issue I would like to improve on, to be stricter because up to so far I haven't been used to having these kinds of students. **(*goal setting*)** [Interview 2]

Dorothy is clearly an experienced teacher, but she was completely taken by surprise by the boy's behaviour, and after the incident she went into the toilet and cried because the pupil had been very aggressive towards her. Her strategy, which contributed to the development of her resilience, was to set herself the goal to become stricter and never touch any mobiles because "Students know their rights very well." She is aware that working on a positive teacher-student relationship may be a key strategy in building her resilience as a beginning EFL teacher.



Dorothy's line drawing, interview 1

Definition of resilience

> **Dorothy**: … resilience is something I think I have learned from my parents, because they've always been hard workers. And also in difficult times, when we were children, they were always working, I saw them waking up in the morning and I have learned to be strong and also in adversities, in the most negative moments I try to, I say, "Stringi i denti (persevere, persist), keep your teeth tied and get on with it. [Interview 2]

8.11: A portrait of Rachel: "I believe in natural parenting. I'm afraid to become everything I don't want to be."

Work and life context

Rachel is a 27-year-old, first year, trainee teacher from the Netherlands and mother of a young child. She spoke a lot about her different attitudes, beliefs and approaches she held compared to her mentor. Her first interview started off with this statement:

> **Rachel**: I have strong parenting ideas and I struggle with that in class, because I see and feel that I cannot really use them in class the way I would like to… I have a son who is 1½ and I practise attachment parenting and natural parenting, which is based on that love is given independently of constraints. He doesn't have to follow rules to get love, which means there is no punishment and reward system. [Interview 1]

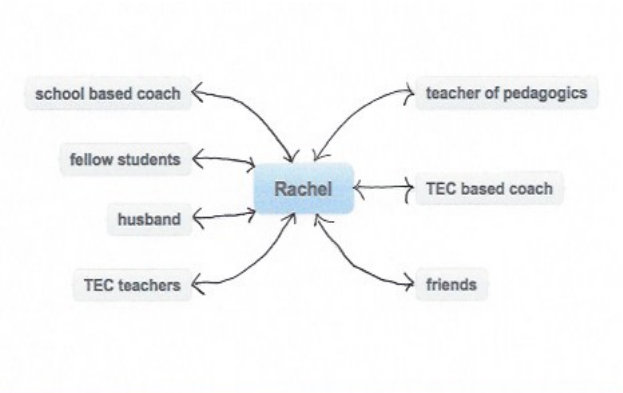
What strategy impacts on her resilience?

For Rachel natural parenting is an essential part of her teaching philosophy, which to her is about responding with sensitivity to her child but also to her pupils, helping them "communicate gently rather than punishing tantrums." Her personal approach was very different to her school based mentor's and therefore she experienced being alone in her teaching sessions. Rachel felt the interdependency she had with her mentor, who had also been her teacher of English during her secondary school years at the same school.

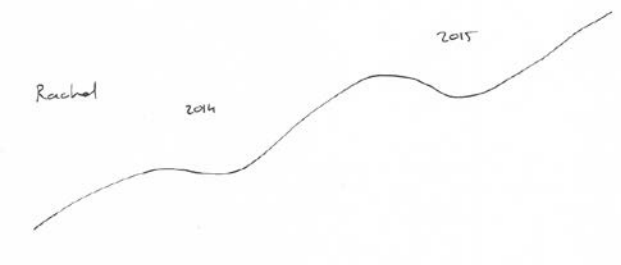
> **Rachel:** I believe in natural parenting. I'm afraid to become everything I don't want to be …I don't feel comfortable in the grading system. I don't feel comfortable in handing out detentions, or punishment essays or stuff like that. I don't like it but seeing as that's what the kids are used to, I have to see how I can change that. In class, I need to have the kids quiet, to keep them working, I have to have the "if you don't shut up now, you're going to get detention." I have to threaten them to get any contribution out of them. **(*goal setting*)** [Interview 1]

Rachel set herself the goal of trying to get around the disciplining policy of her school. She resorts to this strategy to face the challenges she encounters in her classrooms, which impacts on her resilience development.

When asked to draw a relational map, without giving any further instructions in how to draw the map, Rachel was the only participant who drew a network with the arrows going both ways, explaining that the communication between her and her friends was reciprocal and not one way.



Rachel's relational map, interview 2



Rachel's line drawing, interview 1

Definition of resilience

> **Rachel**: Keeping your spark, your fire burning, even though life seems to be aiming a fire hydrant at you. [Interview 1]

8.12: A portrait of Trudy: "Never work harder than your students."

Work and life context

Trudy is a 39-year-old, first year, trainee teacher, originally from the USA, with a Bachelor in Science and MA in Education which is similar to a B.Ed. in primary education. She is married and a mother of two children, aged 3 and 6. She started her teaching career at an international school for primary education in the Netherlands in 2000, went back to the USA to do her Masters, had her children and then enrolled at the TEC in 2014.

What strategy impacts on her resilience?

When Trudy had just started taking courses at the TEC, she got a paid job. During her first months at a secondary school she felt restrained by her colleagues, as they did not want to change any of their strategies. Then she moved on to another team within the same school, which suited her much better. In this second team, one of her colleagues acted as a gatekeeper and gave Trudy access to certain future work processes such as becoming head of the department. Trudy felt very much engaged with her work. She felt the placement was about trying new things and seeking renewal. It empowered her to design her own classroom materials. It gave her a voice she said. After having taken the courses in didactics at the TEC, she wanted to apply everything she had learned and be innovative and challenge herself to try out different teaching approaches. Her first team

was more set in their ways, as some colleagues had two more years to go to their retirement and were therefore not very motivated to be innovative and go along with Trudy's ideas:

> **Trudy**: I'm quite young in the department where I work. So a lot of the teachers have done their way so many years, it's hard for them to change. I think you should never work harder than your students. I feel now that I'm doing the TEC, I have more of a grounding to base my ideas on and my opinions, the literature and the books and things that we learn here, to take with me. So I have more of a standpoint, instead of my own ideas, which I had before, which I always do have. But then I said: "Well, it's just an idea, we can try it." but for my colleagues they are more set. **(*seeking renewal*)** [Interview 1]

From Trudy's story, it seems that for her seeking renewal in her teaching gives her positive energy, which contributes towards the development of her resilience. She realizes that certain strategies might not always work and therefore she needs to try out new things.

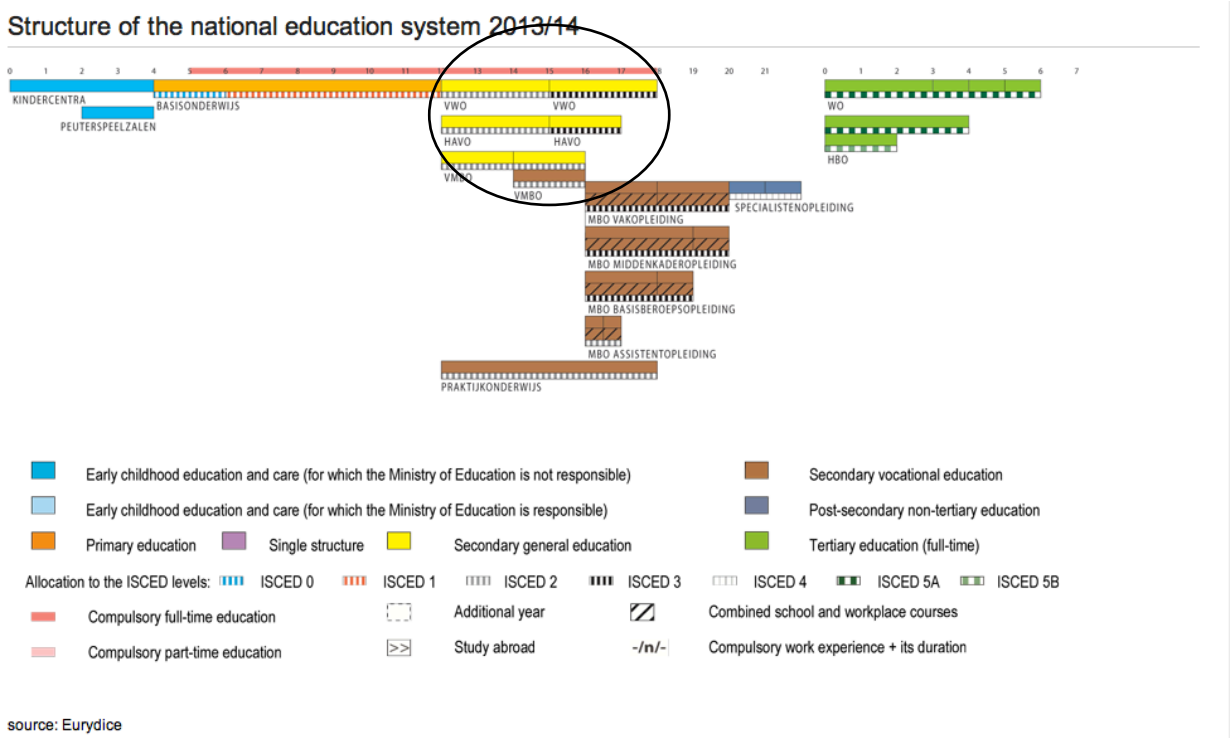
Her biggest asset was that she tried to remain true to herself. She did house calls, which were very valuable to her, as that is how she got to know her pupils even better. Consequently, the pupils and the parents trusted her as she met them in person and discussed their son's or daughter's progress in the privacy of their homes. Her ability to be resilient is mediated by personal, relational and organisational conditions in her school context, which positively impacts on her sense of resilience.

Definition of resilience

> **Trudy**: I love what I do. I think if I look back in my very first years, I did not have much resilience. My resilience consists of the amount of hours I put into my studies to get there, that's for me the hardest part. I love people and I love teaching them something. [Interview 2]

Appendix 9: The Dutch Education System

Graphic Representation of the Dutch Education System



The ECTs study at a teacher education department at a University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, which is Hoger Beroeps Onderwijs in Dutch (HBO, bottom green bars).

Once graduated, teachers may teach at the three lower forms of HAVO (senior general secondary education) and VWO (pre-university education); and all four forms of VMBO (pre-vocational secondary education). These three secondary schools are represented by the yellow bars within the circle.

Pupils can enter one of the following secondary education tracks: 1) Pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO, 4 years); 2) Senior secondary education (HAVO, 5 years); and 3) pre-university education (VWO, 6 years). The enrolment is based on pupil's performance in the standardized tests at the end of primary education and their teachers' recommendations.

ISCED: International Standard Classification of Education

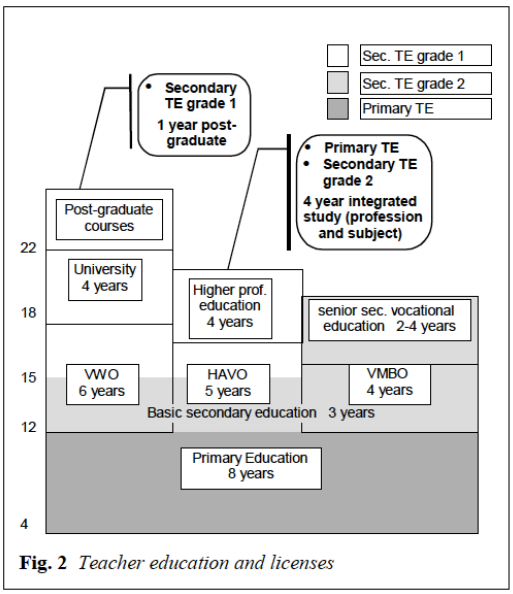
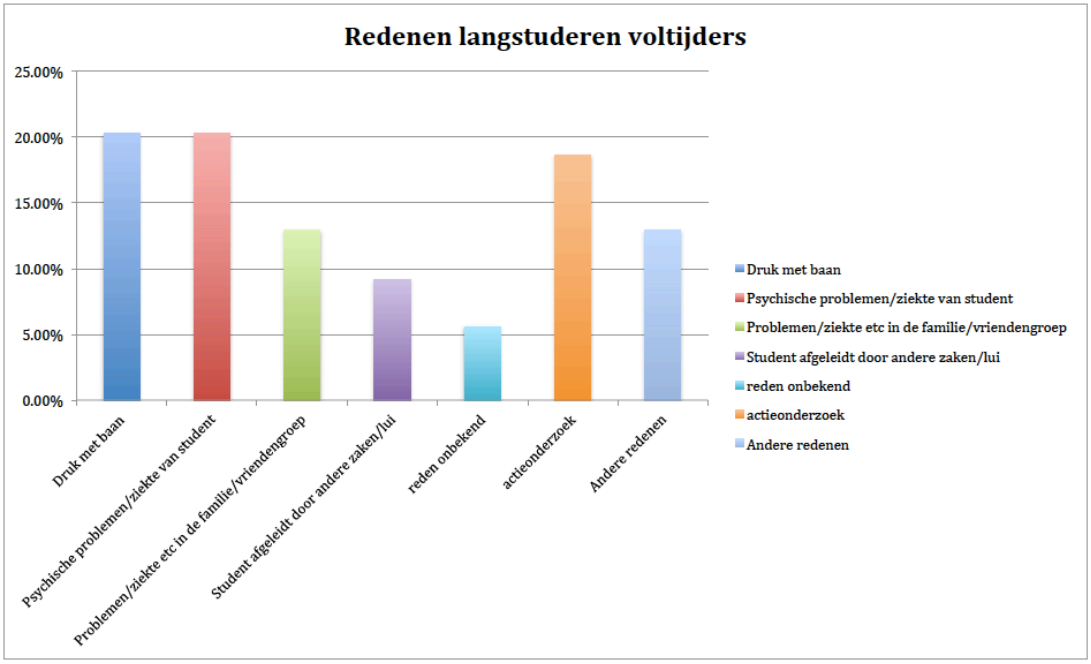


Fig. 2 *Teacher education and licenses*

All participants were enrolled in a four-year undergraduate teacher education programme in the south of the Netherlands, as represented in *Figure 2* in light grey entitled "Secondary TE grade 2". The long-term students Merlin, Adrian, Ralph and Cheryl, however, accepted jobs to pay for their studies, which was the main reason for their study delay. The TEC requires students to pass their foundation year within the first 24 months, after that the TEC can strongly advise the student to stop, but has to accept the student registering at the TEC. Up to and including 2015 secondary school were allowed to take on unqualified teachers for three years without giving them tenure. Therefore many long-term students changed jobs every three years.

In 2013 we conducted a small-scale research project on why long-term Full time students of EFL decided to reregister after 5 to 10 years of study at the TEC. The main reasons for their study delay were: full-time teaching jobs; physical problems, illness; problems with family or with significant other; no clear focus in life; conducting action research, i.e. a final course at the TEC, or no further specification (researcher's translation). In May 2016 there were 68 long-term students registered as EFL students at the TEC, that is they had been registered between 5 to 10 years as a student of EFL. Of these 68: 15 were M.Ed. students; 23 part-time B.Ed. students; and 30 full-time B.Ed. students.


Redenen langstuderen voltijders
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
Druk met baan
Psychische problemen/ziekte van student
Problemen/ziekte etc in de familie/vriendengroep
Student afgeleidt door andere zaken/lui
reden onbekend
actieonderzoek
Andere redenen
Druk met baan
Psychische problemen/ziekte van student
Problemen/ziekte etc in de familie/vriendengroep
Student afgeleidt door andere zaken/lui
reden onbekend
actieonderzoek
Andere redenen

Appendix 10: Codebook

Preliminary Coding Scheme

critical incidents (9)
being emotional
complex and unpredictable nature
feeling isolated
freedom to try new teaching ideas
managing pupil behaviour
pedagogical content knowledge
positive supportive colleagues/ administration
strong content knowledge
uncertainties

strategies (16)
communication
emotional regulation
enthusiasm
goal setting
help-seeking
humour
mindfulness
persistence
problem solving
professional learning
reflection
responsibility
seeking renewal
setting boundaries
time management
work-life balance

personal (protective) factors (12)
courage
empathy
high expectations
hope
initiative
motivation
self-efficacy
self-reflection and mindfulness
sense of humour
sense of purpose/ agency
sense of vocation
social and emotional regulation

contextual (protective) factors (13)
autonomy
collaboration
collegiality
induction programmes
mentors
participation
professional learning community
recognition
school culture
support from family and friends
supportive democratic leadership
teacher-student relationships
trust

Final Coding Scheme

teaching experiences (7)
complex and unpredictable nature
feeling isolated
freedom to try new teaching ideas
managing pupil behaviour
pedagogical content knowledge
positive supportive colleagues/ administration
strong content knowledge

strategies (14)
communication
emotional regulation
goal setting
help-seeking
humour
mindfulness
persistence
problem solving
professional learning
reflection
seeking renewal
setting boundaries
time management
work-life balance

personal (protective) factors (11):
ability to persist/succeed with a task
becoming a better person
being self critical
belief you can control your actions
direct control over your own behaviour
employ proactive ways of coping
goal directed
negotiate the contradictions of teaching
purposeful
self-concept
taking pride

contextual (protective) factors (10)
collaboration
collegiality
induction programmes
mentors
professional learning community
recognition
support from family and friends
supportive democratic leadership
teacher-pupil relationships
trust

Definitions for the three themes addressing the first research question about the kinds of **teaching experiences**:

Professional knowledge	Teaching experiences that deal with content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge;
Professional practice	Teaching experiences that deal with general pedagogical skills;
Professional engagement	Teaching experiences on how the ECTs engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community.

A teacher with subject-related and methodological competence is able to create an effective learning environment, for example, by making the link between learning and the relevant use for EFL. A pedagogically competent teacher provides students with a sound base on which they can make choices and encourage personal development in a safe learning and working environment. A teacher, who is competent at working together with his or her colleagues, contributes to a good educational climate at his or her school (Stichting Beroepskwaliteit Leraren, SBL, 2005).

Strategies (14)	**Definitions/ literature references**
communication	use effective classroom communication
emotional regulation	how the ECTs' emotions guide their professional practices and decisions (Mansfield et al., 2012)
goal setting	choosing a specific performance goal, belonging to one of the seven competences (Stichting Beroepskwaliteit Leraren SBL, 2005).
help seeking	recognize good mentors and will seek them out. Seek out positive relationships and accept offers of friendships from colleagues (Crisp & Cruz, 2009)
humour	use humour to expel stress and create a different perspectives
mindfulness	believe in themselves and for a brighter tomorrow and they persist to work towards that end. Engaging in contemplative practices, such as mindfulness, enhances adults' capacities for emotional and attention regulation, empathy and compassion, and resilience when faced with setbacks (Davidson et al., 2003; Kabat-Zinn, 2003).
persistence	acknowledge their strengths and seek to improve their lesser abilities
problem solving	"Colleagues should signal that ECTs are still learning by sharing their own professional concerns, problems and solutions". (Johnson et al., 2012: 74).
professional learning	"ownership over compliance, conversation over transmission, deep understanding over enacting rules and routines, and goal-directed activity over content coverage"

	(Martin et al., 2014: 147)
reflection	When ECTs are reflective they consider multiple choices and understanding what the consequences of those choices are; Reflective teachers "can look back on events, make judgments about them, and alter their teaching behaviours in light of craft, research, and ethical knowledge." (Valli, 1997, p. 70)
seeking renewal	how ECTs create new teaching materials and in that way achieve real change, resilient teachers often act as change agents.
setting boundaries	Treat people with kindness and respect and “don't go beyond the boundaries” (Johnson et al., 2012: 80).
time management	“Extra release time and specific assistance with the particularly onerous tasks of curriculum planning, assessment and reporting, and student behaviour management addressed some of these issues” (Johnson et al., 2012: 90).
work-life balance	seem to know where to expel energy because ECTs seem to know what they can impact and what they cannot

Personal (protective) factors (12):	**Definitions/ literature references**
courage	ECTs need to take courage to look realistically at their experiences and to remain hopeful for what is to come. The encouragement and enthusiasm ECTs give to their pupils are important factors that help them in their career (Nieto, 2003)
empathy	A teacher-student relationship based on awareness, responsiveness, empathy, and compassion helps children build their own self-regulatory skills. This has been found to leave a positive impact on the school and classroom climate, peer interactions, students’ learning and behaviour, student connectedness to school and positive socio-emotional student outcomes (Morrison et al., 2010).
high expectations	Firm expectations that are embedded within a supportive relationship are likely to leave a positive impact on student behaviour (Morrison et al., 2010).
hope	Building resilience should enable ECTs not only to bounce back but also bounce forward (Walsh, 2002). Colleagues can provide inspiration and hope (Anderson & Olsen, 2006).
initiative	Being an ECT in a school community and within a classroom can be overwhelming and the need to survive may be the first priority before learning to thrive. Have 'Plan B' and take initiative to change the sequence of activities and assessment criteria. (Mansfield et al. (2016a), Building Resilience In Teacher Education, BRITE)

motivation	Day and Gu (2010) point to the importance of teacher motivation when discussing resilience.
self-efficacy	The "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997: 3); "a high level belief in one's own abilities" (Burke & Stets, 2009: 117). The higher teacher's perception of efficacy, the more likely they are to overcome setbacks and persevere in the face of failure (Woolfolk et al., 1990; Goddard et al., 2004) and the higher their resilience (Pajares, 1996).
self-reflection and mindfulness	When teachers are concerned about student behaviours, self-reflection helps them "negotiate the contradictions, dilemmas and tensions of teaching and to employ proactive ways of coping" (Johnson et al, 2012: 83).
sense of humour	Incorporation humour into the classroom helps to build rapport with students (Pollak & Freda, 1997; Fovet, 2009).
sense of purpose/ teacher agency	An individual's ability to act within or upon the world. Resilient teachers display a strong sense of agency, a belief that they can control what happens to them (Howard & Johnson, 2004). It is manifested in how ECTs selectively recognize, locate and implement schemas of action that they have developed through past interactions (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998).
sense of vocation:	Teachers who have an inner disposition to work with children from difficult backgrounds, which is linked with a higher capacity to be resilient (Hansen, 1995). Hansen's classic study suggests that teaching as a vocation presupposes many of the meanings "characteristically associated with helping others learn and improve themselves intellectually and morally" (p. 15).
social and emotional regulation	Teachers talk about the joy, satisfaction and pleasure they feel when they see children learn and succeed (Sutton, 2000). On the other hand, teachers report negative emotions when students misbehave (Hargreaves, 2000). Resilient teachers are patient and competent at forming relationships with children displaying difficult behaviour (Howard & Johnson, 2004).

Contextual (protective) factors (10)	**Definitions/ literature references**
collaboration	Phelps and Benson (2012) found that factors sustaining teachers included the chance to have an impact, positive attitudes of others and professional learning through collaboration and relationships.
collegiality	Relational conditions in teachers' workplaces are one of the most important contributing factors towards teacher resilience (Gu & Day, 2013).
induction programmes	To enhance ECT resilience, it is important to provide relevant rigorous and responsive pre-service and in-service preparation for the profession (Tickle, 2000, 2005; Johnson et al., 2012).

mentors	Corbell et al. (2010) argue that key factors associated with ECTs' satisfaction, commitment and retention include mentor support, colleague support, administrative support, classroom management, student success, instructional resources and parental contacts. Tait (2008) argues that a strong mentor relationship is essential to help ECTs foster their resilience. Reciprocal mentoring (Paris, 2013).
professional learning community	Professional learning communities, which allow all teachers to be leaders of learning, enrich teachers and help foster their resilience (Johnson et al., 2012).
recognition	Positive recognition from colleagues and leaders is another factor that leaves an influence on teacher resilience (Day et al., 2007; Day & Gu, 2010).
support from family and friends	Support networks of family members and friends outside school make a difference in resilient teachers' lives (Howard & Johnson, 2004).
supportive democratic leadership:	Teacher resilience is enhanced by strong leadership within the school (Day & Gu, 2010). Peters and Pierce (2012) discuss the impact of principal's personal support and leadership in supporting ECT's resilience.
teacher-pupil relationships	A teacher-student relationship based on awareness, responsiveness, empathy and compassion helps pupils build their own self-regulatory skills. (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Le Cornu (2013) argues that relationships are critical to resilience building in ECTs. The resilience literature indicates that positive teacher-pupil relationships also have a key role in building the resilience of youths.
trust	To enhance ECT resilience it is important to foster trust and goodwill (Johnson et al., 2012).

Appendix 11: Researcher Memo

It seemed rather odd to provide information about the twelve ECTs, to "situate your sample" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 303) and not include myself. I felt I needed to explore how my insider status shaped the research process. A common feature of qualitative research is that there is relatively little standardized instrumentation. Essentially, as Miles et al. (2014) contend, the researcher will be "the main instrument in the study" (p. 9). My social positioning in relation to the ECTs therefore needs to be identified, so as to provide the reader with "an understanding of the relative privilege and power held by the investigator and participants" (Morrow, 2007: 215) as well as the lens through which I view the ECTs, and the phenomenon of interest that is resilience.

I went to the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands, and completed a Bachelor's and a Master's degree. Then I went to Sheffield University for five years, where I taught Dutch as a foreign language and Modern American Literature. In 1989, I returned to the Netherlands, where I became a teacher educator at Fontys University of Applied Sciences. I occupy some categories of privilege: white, middle-class, heterosexual and able-bodied. Even though I was good at maths, I had a preference for subjects like Dutch and English Literature, where I could focus more on interpretation than right and wrong answers.

Among my motivations for choosing ECTs' stories of resilience as a research topic, the most influential are rooted in my 25 years as teacher educator and EFL teacher. My experiences working in similar schools to those of the ECTs interviewed, and my current position as coordinator and teacher educator, provided an initial point at which to begin conversations. Thus, the role of the researcher as an insider researcher was influenced by my past and current professional relationships. An insider researcher is defined as "a researcher who belongs to the groups/communities they are researching" (Braun and Clarke, 2013: 332). The ECTs' reflections on their teaching struck me with the force of their lived experience, immediate and graspable. Years of experience working with similar types of students had convinced me that ECTs had interesting stories to tell and that they could articulate their own conceptualisations in language that was their own.

The activity of writing has been vital for me. Keeping reflective notes helped to explore and explain why and how I went about my research. The twists and turns of the research revealed surprises. This fed into parts of chapters informing why and how research decisions were taken. It helped me to become aware of my thinking processes and to become more critical. Writing out ideas and arguments often helped to crystallise them and to continue whenever I got stuck.

In this research, the storytelling has not been a binary affair between the researcher and the ECT, but a triangular affair. The third point of the triangle was the meaning of the stories, i.e. what lay behind the reflections of the ECTs. I listened repeatedly to their words to understand the experience that prompted them and wrote my reflections in the memos and the journal.

I looked at my own process as a researcher trying to answer the three research questions and consequently building my own story of resilience as a researcher (Kincheloe, 2012). Before I interviewed the participants, I drew my own relational map and a story line believing that you should always try out the assignments you give to your participants. During the collection, analysis and writing process, I repeated the mapping and line drawing in order to critically look at my own issues.

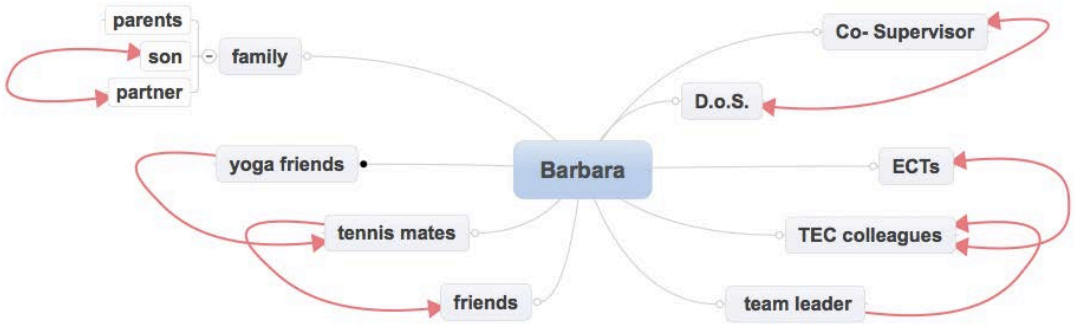


Figure 1: Relational map [researcher's journal, September 2013]

Figure 2: Line drawing [researcher's journal, December 2016]

When presenting the data so that it reflected the cases and their stories of resilience, I learned about my own resilience, as can be seen in *Figures 1* and *2*. The title of my vignette would be something like: "Writing the ECTs' stories of resilience made me reflect on my own story of resilience as a teacher educator and researcher." In qualitative research the researcher is the instrument collecting the data. At all stages of the research, I remained aware of this and tried to be reflective about my own values, assumptions and biases and also closeness to the research topic.

When the ECTs set their minds to solving problems, they frequently remembered strategies that worked in previous experiences and that is how they fostered their resilience. The findings suggest that it is important to step back and observe your limitations as a beginning teacher and researcher and set that as a problem to be solved. By means of trial and error we record what works and jettison what does not work. The idea that things get better does not mean that things improve every day. We know there will be a lot of ups and downs, as was indicated by the line drawings presented in this research. In their stories the ECTs explained how some things went wrong but all twelve survived their first years and learned from their mistakes.

By focussing on the qualitative dimensions of ECTs' professional lives, I was able to explore how resilience begets resilience. It has taught me how challenges bring out the best in us. This research has provided me with memorable critical incidents in which ECTs try to deal with the challenges of teaching and look for strategies that foster their resilience. This will help me with a further development of the TEC curriculum and the intake procedure for part-time EFL teachers. I am grateful to the ECTs who made time to explain their teaching experiences to me, and their professional generosity changed my world forever.

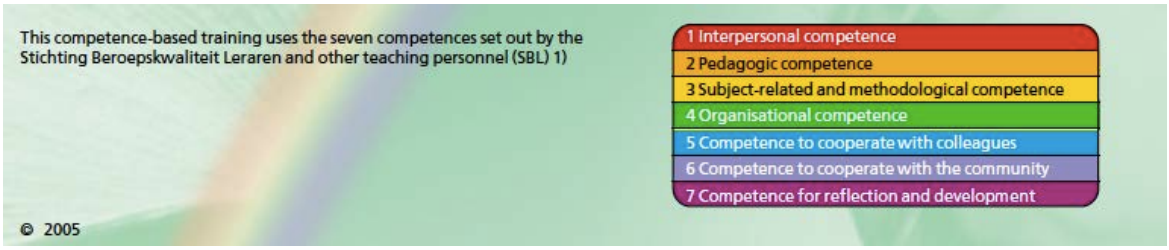
Appendix 12: Transcription Notation System

Transcription notation system (adapted from Braun and Clarke, 2013)

identity of speaker	ECTs' name followed by a colon signals the identity of a speaker; Interviewer for when the interviewer is speaking;
inaudible speech	(inaudible) for speech and sounds that are completely inaudible;
non verbal utterances	common non-verbal sounds uttered by ECTs such as "erm", "er", "mm" and "ah ha" are often not included;
overlapping speech	((in overlap)) before the start of the overlapping speech;
spoken abbreviations	abbreviation is used VMBO, HAVO, VWO and translation is provided;
use of punctuation	" …" are used to signal a pause, hesitation or that a section of data has been deleted. The ECTs did not always talk in sentences so little or no punctuation was included in the orthographic transcriptions.

Appendix 13: Seven Competences with Performance Indicators

The seven competences set out by the Stichting Beroepskwaliteit Leraren (2005)



As an example, Competence 3: Subject related and methodological competence:

The teacher in secondary and vocational education must help students acquire knowledge of a specific subject or profession and to familiarise themselves with the way in which this is applied in daily life and at work. He/she also helps students to gain an insight into what they can expect from society and the world of work.

A teacher with subject-related and methodological competence is able to create an effective learning environment, for example, by making the link between learning and the relevant use of this professional know-how for the students in the wider community.

A teacher with subject-related and methodological competence

- matches the subject matter and his/her actions to the needs of the students taking into account individual differences
- together with the student, maps out an (individual) learning pathway, for example, including extra-curricula learning and on-the-job training
- is able to motivate students in performing their learning and work tasks, challenges them to do their best and helps them to accomplish these successfully
- teaches the students to learn and work from and with each other, in order to stimulate their independence, etc.

(source: SBL)

Competence 3: Requirement at teacher training competence level: B3

B 3 The student is able to demonstrate that he/she has a command of the subject. He/she is able to establish links between theory and practice, but also between his/her own teaching materials and related materials. He/she is able to design complex learning processes, ensuring variation, structure, support and evaluation of the learning process in its execution. He/she involves the pupils in this process.

This takes place under supervision

Performance indicators:

Design

B 3.1 ensures meaningful and practicable learning activities
B 3.2 designs complex learning processes
B 3.3 designs both individual and group-based activities
B 3.4 develops simple assessment tools
B 3.5 uses effective written, audio-visual and digital teaching materials
B 3.6 adapts teaching resources (on the basis of questions, suggestions, examples)

Presentation

B 3.7 presentation of the materials has a clear structure
B 3.8 makes active use of acquired knowledge and identifies with the world of pupils
B 3.9 uses different work forms
B 3.10 where necessary, switches from theory to practice
B 3.11 processes currency and practice in the teaching activity

Supervision

B 3.12 analyses how pupils formulate their own learning process
B 3.13 supports the pupils in their learning process by pointing out the learning issues
B 3.14 reflects on the learning process with pupils with respect to results and accompanying process
B 3.15 observes and analyses (subject-specific) learning problems

Subject matter

B 3.16 is able to establish links between the content of his/her own subject and that of related subjects
B 3.17 has a full command of the subject matter (see knowledge base)
B 3.18 uses current applications from the field
B 3.19 is able to justify the usefulness of the subject for the development of the pupils

Evaluation

B 3.20 evaluates the learning process of the pupils and the results of this
B 3.21 can support his/her didactical beliefs
•

Appendix 14: Ethical Grid developed by Stutchbury and Fox

Ethical grid developed by Stutchbury and Fox (2009: 495-496)

An ethical grid, including possible questions that could be posed within each level of the framework.

External/ecological

Cultural sensitivity

1 What are the values, norms and roles in the environment in which I am working and are they likely to be challenged by this research?

Awareness of all parts of the institution

2 What is the relationship between the group/individual I am working with and the institution as a whole? How does it affect the participant(s)?

Responsive communication – awareness of the wishes of others

3 How might my work be viewed/interpreted by others in the institution? How will the language I use be interpreted?

Responsibilities to sponsors

4 What are my responsibilities to the people paying for or supporting this research (local authority, my school, external bodies)?

Codes of practice

5 Have I worked within the British Educational Research Association guidelines? Are there other relevant codes which might also be applicable? Am I aware of my rights and responsibilities through to publication?

Efficiency/ use of resources

6 Have I made efficient use of the resources available to me, including people's time?

Quality of evidence on which conclusions are based

7 Have I got enough evidence to back-up my conclusions and recommendations?

The law

8 What legal requirements relating to working with children do I need to comply with? Am I aware of my data protection responsibilities? Am I aware of the need for disclosure of criminal activity? Do I need written permissions?

Risk

9 Are there any risks to anyone as a result of this research?

Consequential/utilitarian

Benefits for individuals

10 What are the benefits of my doing this research to the participants? Would an alternative methodology bring greater individual benefits?

Benefits for particular groups/ organisation

11 What are the benefits of my doing my research to the school/department? Could these be increased in any way? How will I ensure that they know about my findings? Is my work relevant to the school development plan? Can I justify my choice of methods to my sponsors?

Most benefits for society

12 Is this a worthwhile area to research? Am I contributing to the "greater good"? Is it high quality and open to scrutiny?

Avoidance of harm

13 Are there any sensitive issues likely to be discussed or aspects of the study likely to cause discomfort or stress?

Benefits for the researcher

14 Am I going to be able to get enough data to write a good thesis or paper? Am I aware of my publication rights? What might I learn from this project? Will it help in my long-term life goals?

Deontological

Avoidance of wrong – honesty and candour

15 Have I been open and honest in advance with everyone who might be affected by this research? Are they aware that they can withdraw, in full or in part, if they wish?

Fairness

16 Have I treated all participants fairly? Am I using incentives fairly? Will I acknowledge everyone involved fairly? Can I treat all participants equally?

Reciprocity

17 Have I explained all the implications and expectations to the participants? Have I negotiated mutually beneficial arrangements? Have I made myself available when those involved might wish me to be? Are the participants clear about roles, including my own, as they relate to expectations?

Tell the truth

18 If there is any need for covert research how will I deal with this? What will I do if I find out something that the participants/school/department do not like? How will I report unpopular findings?

Keep promises

19 Have I clarified access to the raw data and how I will share findings including at publication? How will I ensure confidentiality?

Do the most positive good

20 Is there any other way I could carry out this research that would bring more benefits to those involved?

Relational/individual

Genuine collaboration/trust established

21 Who are the key people involved? How can I build a constructive relationship with them?

Avoid imposition/respect autonomy

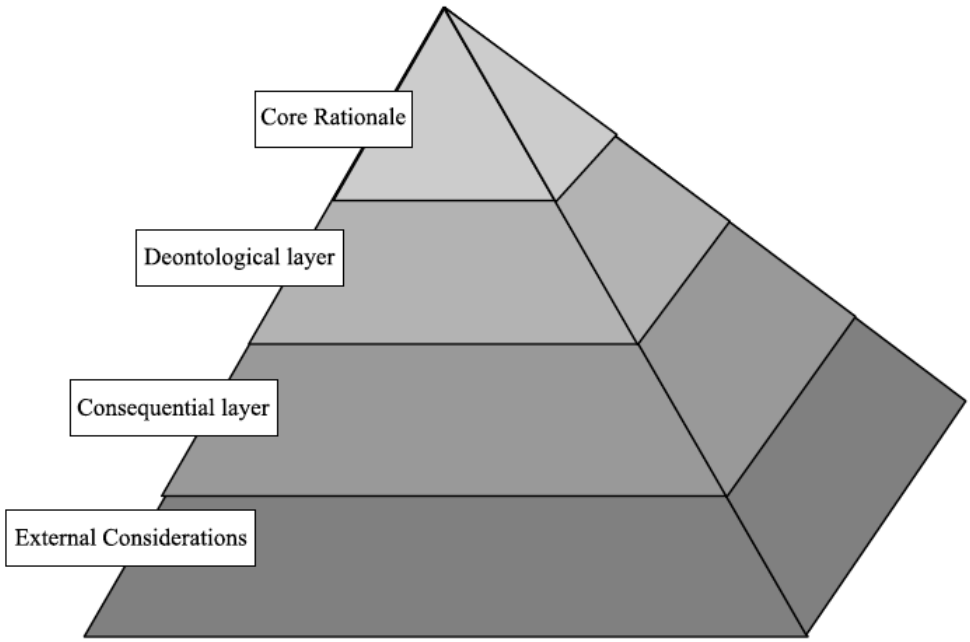
22 Am I making unreasonable or sensitive demands on any individuals? Do they appreciate that participation is voluntary?

Confirmation of findings

23 What steps will I take in my methodology to ensure the validity and reliability of my findings? Can I involve participants in validation? Will I report in an accessible way to those involved?

Respect persons equally

24 How will I demonstrate my respect for all participants? Have I treated pupils in the same way as teachers?



Layers in the ethical grid (Stutchbury & Fox, 2009: 492)

Appendix 15: Informed Consent Form

Roehampton University London

Informed consent form for participation in research

Title of project: Stories of Resilience
Teacher Researcher: Drs Barbara Roosken

The aim of this study is to discuss what enables teachers to grow rather than just survive in their first five years of teaching. Or more precisely how would you describe a resilient teacher? Your answers will be used in the strictest confidence, for research purposes only, and only the researcher will have access to them until they have been processed, when they will be disposed of securely. The results of the study will be published in anonymized form, so that neither you nor your school can be identified. Although I would appreciate your help, you are free to withdraw from this study at any time.
Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study. Please express your formal agreement by ticking the following boxes and signing below.

☐ I understand what this project involves and agree to have interviews for data collection.

☐ I have been given a copy of this form.

Signature _____ **Date:** _____

School _____

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